

PLAIN AND AFFECTIONATE  
**ADDRESSES**  
TO  
YOUTH.

BY

ROBERT GENTLEMAN;

*K*

Editor of Mr. ORTON's EXPOSITION of the OLD TESTAMENT, with  
devotional and practical Reflections, for the Use of Families.

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## REFERENCES

THE BIRDS OF THE BAHAMAS



## P R E F A C E.

THE following Addresses to Youth, with many others of a similar nature, were originally delivered, in the form of Sermons, to the young people under my pastoral care, during the space of more than twenty-five years ; it may therefore be naturally expected, that the style and manner may sometimes vary, and that the same thoughts will frequently occur in discourses delivered at the distance of many years from each other.—They are now changed from the formality of sermons, into more familiar addresses ; several reasons have led me to adopt this method, and to submit them to the eye and candor of the Public.

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I have ever felt and cultivated a tender and affectionate regard for the rising generation; and in every place where Providence has fixed my residence, a considerable portion of my labours have been directed to them, either as young catechumens, or, when more advanced, in reading lectures to them on the being and perfections of God, the evidences of Christianity, and the duties of the Christian life; often intermixing with these, some more entertaining subjects from natural history and philosophy, by which I endeavoured to open their minds, and lead them on to a love of reading and science. Among these lectures I frequently introduced one or other of the following Addresses, which at length I reviewed and corrected, in the best manner my time and health would permit; and afterwards delivered them, in the form in which they now appear, on

Lord's-day

Lord's-day evenings for several months together, during the last Summer and Autumn. I hope they have had some good effect; and I did not know how better to gratify my own feelings, and express my regard for my young friends, than by committing these affectionate sentiments of my heart to the press, and presenting them with a copy for their more private and attentive consideration, and as a token of my most sincere love to them, and concern for their everlasting welfare.

I have endeavoured to divest my addresses of every thing that was foreign to the subject, and to make them as short, plain, and affectionate as I was able.—Allow me to add, I have sons and daughters grown up and gone out into the world ; and I acknowledge a tender concern for their best interest, has had a very considerable influence on my

A 2 mind,

mind in engaging me to draw up these addresses, that I might present them to, and leave them with, each of my children, as perhaps the best and last legacy that I shall be able to give them. May their hearts be wise, *then shall my heart rejoice, even mine.*—I have also had hopes, that these plain addresses may find their way, not only into those families to whom I might present them, and for the benefit of whose younger branches they were more immediately delivered, but into other families, where there may be several children and servants; and that the reading of one of them may be encouraged, as a suitable and useful employment for a quarter of an hour on a Lord's-day evening.

They might be still more useful if they should find their way into boarding-schools for young gentlemen or ladies, and be read there by an assistant, or one of

of the senior scholars, on a Lord's-day evening.

Above all, they might be useful in Sunday and Charity Schools, if the visitors would be at the pains to read one of these at the close of the sabbath, and after the business of the day is over. It was a regard to these schools, and a conviction that something of this nature was wanting, which gave the first rise to this design, though many other considerations have concurred since to carry it into execution.—As singing is a frequent and proper exercise in these schools, I have added a hymn at the close of each address, which may be used or not, as the visitors please.

When children or youth leave these schools, and go out to be apprentices or servants, they ought to be furnished with a few serious and useful books, and I would recommend it to the consideration

of visitors, governors, &c. whether such addresses as these, together with the Religious Tradesman, or some of Mrs. Trimmer's useful publications, should not be put into their hands, and recommended to their particular attention, lest, having no proper books to read, they should soon forget the good instructions they have received.

I am sensible there are many other subjects, besides those that are treated of in these addresses, which ought to be laid before young persons; and I sincerely wish some abler hand would furnish them with another volume on those relative duties and personal virtues so essentially necessary and ornamental to youth: such as justice, benevolence, brotherly love, honour and respect to superiors, peaceableness, truth or veracity, obedience to parents, &c. also on the importance of improving the mind;

mind, on humility, and pride, meekness, contentment, temperance, diligence, frugality, dress, an obliging carriage, &c. These, and many other such subjects, treated in a plain and affectionate manner, would furnish very useful instructions for young people, and be a work which I apprehend is much wanted in boarding and Sunday schools.

Some such addresses, if God spares my life and renews my strength, I hope now and then still to deliver to my young friends; but many laborious duties and increasing infirmities, forbid any sanguine hopes of completing this design for years to come, if indeed at all.—I bow myself with submission to my heavenly Father's will, entreating the prayers of my Christian brethren, especially of my young friends, who may have found any pleasure or improvement from the perusal of this

this little volume, that the Lord would grant unto me, that I may find mercy of HIM in that day.

R. GENTLEMAN.

KIDDERMINSTER,  
*March 26th, 1792.*

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## ADDRESSES TO YOUTH.

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### ADDRESS I.

#### THE ADVANTAGES OF EARLY PIETY.

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#### PROVERBS viii. 17.

*I love them that love me, and those that seek  
me early shall find me.*

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

HOW can I better express my concern  
for you, and love to you, than by en-  
deavouring to lead you to true wisdom and  
happiness? And what is more likely to reach  
and influence your hearts, than the encour-  
aging declaration in the text. Solomon in  
this chapter represents wisdom under a per-  
sonal character, as addressing herself to the  
sons of men; and he does it in terms that

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are very applicable to our great Teacher and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. You may therefore with great justice and propriety consider Jesus Christ as addressing you in these words; you may imagine the infinite tenderness of his heart, the complacency of his countenance, the condescension of his attitude, while he says to you all, *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.*

But observe, he says this only to those who SET THEMSELVES SERIOUSLY TO INQUIRE AFTER HIM, to those who are not content only to hear something of him, and learn some little about him, but who seriously inquire what kind of a Saviour he is, what he came into the world to teach, and do, and suffer; what commands he hath given, what duties he requires, and what blessings he hath promised to bestow on them that serve him.— He speaks to those who are sensible of their own ignorance, weakness, and guilt; who know that they need instruction, and pardon, and sanctification; and without these, must perish in their sins.—He speaks to those who are

are willing to *come to him*, and *learn of him*, and obey him, and be saved by him; who *desire to win Christ, and be found in him*. Further, he speaks to those who seek him with great earnestness, who *seek him early* with great diligence and solicitude.—When a person is much concerned to obtain any thing he wants, or to pursue a journey, he rises early in the morning to obtain his ends; so God speaks of rising early and sending his messengers to denote how much his heart was set upon the success of their message.—Agreeable to this, these words are addressed to such young persons as seek Christ and his friendship above all other things, and whose souls are intent upon finding him.—It may further denote, that they seek him in early life, while they are young, and as soon as possible: they do not seek other things first, and spend their early days in idleness and play, or in pursuing riches and pleasures, and neglect Christ and religion till they are more advanced in life; but they seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and pursue it with all the ardour and vigour of youth. And, once more, this

proceeds from a principle of love to Christ, not merely from fear or self-interest, though these may have some influence, but principally from love to Christ, on account of his excellencies and his great kindness to them.—We shall have but little heart to seek after that which we do not love: now Christ is so glorious a person, and so valuable a friend, that he cannot be sought after without being loved; every one that is acquainted with him must love him, not merely for what he hath to bestow, but for what he is in himself—*the chief of ten thousand, and altogether lovely.*

Now which of you, my young friends, can answer to this character? Which of you are seriously inquiring after Christ, and wisdom, and holiness? Which of you are doing this early in life, early every morning, and with great earnestness and solicitude? Which of you can say that Christ is so great, so wise, so good, that I long to know and love him more, and serve him better. Whoever you are, his eye is this moment fixed upon you, his heart melts over you. To you he addresses these words of wisdom, *I love them that love me,*

*me, and those that seek me early shall find me:* think a moment on this gracious promise. Our Lord repeats it again in *John* xiv. 21. *he that loveth me, I will love him.* He sees the first desire after him, the smallest spark of love to him that is kindled in the breast of a youth or child; he discerns it, is pleased with it, and amply returns it. Christ does not only love the most eminent saints, christians of deep experience and long standing, and great usefulness in the church, but every one that loves him—the youngest, the poorest, the weakest—and this love of Christ to him shall be attended with the most desirable and happy effects: more especially, as it is here expressed, *they shall find him.* According to that promise in *John* xiv. 21. *I will love him, and will manifest myself to him: I will come unto him, and make my abode with him.*

If you love Christ you shall find him in your **SECRET RETIREMENTS**, leading your hearts to God, kindling a flame of devotion, and filling your soul with joy and peace.—You will find him in **HIS HOUSE AND ORDINANCES** fixing your attention, cherishing devout affections,

and promoting your progress in knowledge, and your establishment in piety.—When you grow up, and come to the **LORD'S TABLE**, you will find him there, *making himself known to you in breaking of bread, and shedding abroad his love in your heart.*—You will find him where perhaps you least expected him, **IN THE COMMON BUSINESS OF LIFE**, directing you in difficulties, keeping you from evil, prospering your undertakings, giving you favour and acceptance with God and man.—You will find him guiding you by his counsel, and afterwards receiving you into glory: thus *shall your fellowship be with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*—Let me intreat all of you then, my young friends, to seek him early—let me urge you to do it by the following considerations.

IF YOU DO NOT FIND **CHRIST** YOU ARE **UTTERLY UNDONE**, and it had been better for you that you had never been born;—if you find not Christ, you find not the only physician that can heal the disorders of the mind, and save you from everlasting death;—if you find not Christ, you find not the only friend

who

who can enrich you: for, as he adds in the verse after the text, *riches and honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness. I cause them that love me to inherit substance, and I will fill their treasures.* — Without him, the gain of the whole world will not profit you; without him, you cannot find pardon, you cannot find God as your father and friend: *for no man cometh to the Father but by him.* — In one word, if you find not Christ now as your Saviour, you will find him as your just and awful Judge at last, who will banish you to an everlasting distance from him, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

Again, IF YOU DO NOT SEEK HIM EARLY, YOU MAY NEVER FIND HIM AT ALL — you may die soon, and then it will be too late to seek him; or you may be given up to your own heart's lusts, and *become one of those marshy places that shall never be healed;* this, I fear, is the case with many, and of some who have had a religious education, and have been awakened by the ordinances and providences of God; but they have out-grown their religious impressions and convictions, they have hardened

hardened their hearts, and God has withdrawn his grace ; they now glory in their sins, and turn them into a jest—and such persons are scarcely ever reclaimed ;—they deride religion, and laugh at the advice and prayers of their pious parents and friends :—this is one of the last stages of hardness and impenitence. This may be your case, if you neglect religion while you are young ; or, if under some heavy affliction, and the approaches of death, you should be awakened, and in the terror of your heart should cry for mercy, it may then be too late, and God may say to you (as in *Prov. i. 28.*) *when distress and anguish cometh upon you, ye shall call upon me, but I will not answer; ye shall seek me early, but ye shall not find me.*

Again, YE CAN NEVER SEEK CHRIST WITH GREATER ADVANTAGE THAN IN EARLY LIFE.—Your hearts are tender, your affections warm ; you see the evil of sin in the misery of the wicked ; you see the beauty of holiness in the example of the pious ; your judgment is convinced that *godliness is great gain*, and you have every help you can desire to attain it. What difficulties have you now, which will not be greater hereafter ? Do you love the world

world now? and will you love it less after more years have been devoted to it? Do you love pleasure and diversions now? and will you love them less when you have indulged them longer? perhaps you will; but other vices may predominate, and you will only change one sinful lust or passion for another.—Are you averse to prayer or self-denial now? and will they grow easier by neglecting them, when you are accustomed to sin, when conscience is more depraved, the spirit more grieved, and you have got a greater habit of trifling with sacred things? Cannot you bear the banter of fools now? and will you bear it better when more entangled in their company? —O be persuaded to seek Christ early, to mind religion while young; it will prevent a thousand difficulties.

And further, **IT WILL SECURE YOU FROM A THOUSAND SNARES.**—The world is full of temptations; you will find many endeavouring to corrupt you, and very few that will do any thing to warn, encourage, and help you:—Christ is your best guide, and guardian, and friend; and when you have committed your soul to his care, you will find

find yourself safe and happy.—Having been used to converse with God and Christ, and the scriptures and your own hearts, and tasted the pleasures of such converse, you will shun and abhor all bad company.—The entertainments of devotion will spoil your relish for dissolute mirth; you will pursue the world moderately, sensible you have a better prize in view. Enjoying communuion with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, will raise your soul above all mean and dangerous amusements. You will be shocked at profane and indecent language, at the song of the drunkard, the distorted countenance of the gamester, and the allurements of the rake and the harlot.

Further, IT WILL BE YOUR SUPPORT UNDER MANY SORROWS.—Flowery as your path may appear, you will find briars and thorns in it—for *man is born to trouble*.—You may lose your friends and parents; but when father or mother forsake you, the Lord will take you up.—You may lose your substance, and be disappointed in your favourite schemes; but you will find godliness with contentment the greatest gain; and in this you will be rich and

and happy.—God may weaken your strength in the way, and wear you out by pining sickness; but *when flesh and heart faileth, God will be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever*; and you will not regret an early death, that transmits you to immortal life, for *godliness bath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

And again, if you seek Christ early, IT WILL OPEN TO YOU MANY SOURCES OF PLEASURE. *Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* You will have pleasure in retirement and being alone; which thoughtless irreligious youths hate, because they cannot bear their own thoughts.—Converse with God, and your own heart will give you a joy which none but the pious know, and which they cannot fully express.—You will find pleasure in the friendship of the wise and good, and you will strengthen each other's hands in God.—You will find pleasure in the ordinances of religion, and *a day in God's courts will be better to you than a thousand.*—You will find true pleasure even in the common busines of life; for *whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, you will do all to the glory of God,* and from

from a regard to his will; it will give you greater advantages for serving God and your generation; you will better understand your duty, and have a better relish for it; your zeal will be greater, and your opportunities of doing good will be more than others; and you may expect peculiar measures of divine grace to furnish you for your work, and carry you comfortably and honourably through it. Christ will be with you, and what can you wish for more?

Finally, IF YOU MIND RELIGION YOUNG,  
IT WILL BRIGHTEN YOUR HEAVENLY CROWN.  
—God will remember the kindness and zeal of your youth, and confer distinguished honour upon you in the future world. The more years you have employed in serving Christ, the larger treasures will be laid up in heaven, and the greater capacity you will have for relishing its happiness. You will, finally, be admitted to the most honourable and endearing friendship with God and Christ, and all holy beings, *and be for ever with each other and the Lord.* What more can I say to you, my young friends, what stronger arguments can I urge upon you.

To

To conclude, I would earnestly recommend to you the diligent study of your Bible, especially the New Testament, that you may see what Christ requires of you, and what he proposes to you; and also the daily exercise of serious devotion, prayer, and praise: and may the spirit of Christ be largely poured out upon you, and fix your affections upon him; for grace and a thousand blessings *shall be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.* Amen.

## HYMN

YE hearts, with youthful vigour warm,  
In smiling crouds draw near,  
And turn from ev'ry mortal charm,  
A Saviour's voice to hear :

“ The soul, that longs to see my face,  
“ Is sure my love to gain ;  
“ And those, that early seek my grace,  
“ Shall never seek in vain.”

What object, Lord, my soul should move,  
If once compar'd with thee ?  
What beauty should command my love,  
Like what in Christ I see ?

Away, ye false delusive toys,  
Vain tempters of the mind !  
'Tis here I fix my lasting choice,  
And here true bliss I find.

## ADDRESS II.

### REST AND PEACE IN CHRIST'S SERVICE.

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MATTHEW xi. 28. 29.

*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

MY YOUNG FRIENDS,

RELIGION is, comparatively, easy at the beginning; and it is exceeding pleasant as you advance in life. Under this character I would now recommend it to you—and let your conscience be witness this day between God and you, as to the truth of his own declaration, that *her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are paths of peace.* And if this is true of religion, and of nothing but religion, I hope you will be engaged

engaged to make it your immediate choice and pursuit.

In our text you see the Divine Redeemer surveying with tender compassion a number of unhappy creatures overwhelmed with sorrow and guilt, and the slavery of sin, and inviting them to come to him for liberty, rest, and comfort; and he urges their acceptance of his favours by the assurance of the meekness, condescension, and tenderness, with which he would treat them. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; I am meek, and lowly in heart.*

Let me beg of you to CONSIDER THE DESCRIPTION HERE GIVEN OF CHRIST AS A DIVINE SAVIOUR. Think on the gracious and benevolent temper of Christ. How amiable does he appear inviting the miserable and unhappy to come to him for ease, comfort, and refreshment.—So in another place, *if any man thirsteth, let him come unto me and drink—* and *him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out:*—and his promises are *not in word only, but in deed and truth.* The whole gospel is nothing but an history of his grace and

goodness.—His benignity and love are evident in every action of his life, in all his precepts and promises, and in every office he sustained in behalf of sinners.

Further, these words express THE LENITY AND SWEETNESS OF HIS LAWS AND GOVERNMENT: *I am meek and lowly in heart.* I am ready to condescend to your weakness and ignorance, to your depravity and sorrows; and all my government over you shall be gentle, kind, and compassionate, full of tenderness and clemency.—And how true are those gracious words, from his hands *we have not received the spirit of bondage to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we address God as our Father.* Under his government we are not so much like servants as *children of God, and brethren of Christ.*

Once more, these words express THE EFFICACY OF HIS POWER TO SAVE. *Come, saith he, and I will give you rest.* He speaks with divine authority, and as becomes the sovereign Prince of Heaven.—The case he here refers to is an extraordinary one, it is a mind enslaved by sin, a conscience overwhelmed

whelmed with the weight of guilt; a soul labouring under the fear of divine displeasure and wrath—and this is a case beyond all human help.—Our kind acquaintance may wish us rest, our pious friends may pray for our peace; but Christ alone can give it, be the case ever so deplorable: there is no guilty conscience which his blood cannot cleanse—there is no fearful soul whom his grace cannot comfort—there is no slave of sin whom he cannot set at liberty. All power and authority are put into his hands, and *he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.*

Consider further, my young friends, THE NATURE AND EXCELLENCE OF THAT REST AND PEACE WHICH HE GIVES TO ALL HIS DISCIPLES; it is rest to the soul; and this is the most solid, true, and important rest: for however easy the body may be, however flourishing our earthly circumstances, if the soul is uneasy, a man must be wretched and miserable. He conveys rest and peace to the mind—a rest which all the world cannot give.—*Peace, says he, I leave with you, my peace*

*I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you:—and this includes rest and peace to the guilty conscience; and there is no rest sweeter than this, no blessing more valuable than deliverance from the terrors of an accusing conscience. The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?—How have I seen its awful power in sick and dying circumstances? And how can a soul be at rest with such emotions in his bosom, and who has every thing to fear from the terrors of an Almighty God. But Christ has an antidote for this fear, a sovereign balm to heal the wounded conscience; he can speak pardon and peace to the guilty soul, and say, *son, daughter be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* And hence it is that a believing christian can live in comfort and die in hope, and calmly and serenely look into the eternal world without a misgiving fear. He can look inward, and upward, and forward, with a cheerful confidence in a forgiving God.—And would not you, my young friends, wish to do so? Then come unto Christ,*

*Christ, and learn of him, and ye shall find this rest to your souls.*

It includes, also, REST FROM THE POWER AND DOMINION OF SIN AND SATAN; this is another most valuable article in that rest and peace which Christ gives. There is no tyrant so arbitrary as Satan; there are no slaves so abject and miserable as the servants of sin.— Here also Jesus is a divine Saviour, he can free the mind from the dominion of sin, subdue every corrupt passion, and regulate all the inward desires of the heart:— he can conquer every lust, and bring every power of the soul into obedience to his will; by his word and spirit he can break off every chain in which you are tied and bound, and bring you into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.— Happy youths, happy men, whom Jesus leads to this delightful liberty!— like transported prisoners on whom the gates of their captivity are opened, they go out with joy, from the slavery of sin, and are lead forth with peace into all the sweet paths of holiness and happiness.

Further,

Further, Christ inspires the soul with a PEACEFUL AND HAPPY TEMPER.—He not only dethrones Satan, and breaks off the chains of sin, but he puts the released soul under the government of his word and spirit, there it is trained up in all the graces of a devout, holy, cheerful, and godlike temper.—Under these influences all the *fruits of the spirit* spring and grow to maturity. *Love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*, and these give *rest to the soul*.—Christ leads the soul to still higher and nobler sources of comfort and peace—to delight in God and filial communion with him—to rejoice in Christ—to trust in the providence of his heavenly Father, and the hope of a happy immortality.—He goes on forming and improving the mind; filling it with such holy virtues, such communion with God and Christ, such pious joys and heavenly hopes as will make all your journey through life calm and pleasant, destroy all the terrors of death, and make the views of eternity cheerful and delightful.

And,

And, once more, CHRIST WILL BRING ALL HIS DISCIPLES TO THE REALMS OF EVERLASTING REST AND PEACE.—Here, your rest and peace may be often interrupted; innumerable accidents, trials, and disappointments, and the ideas and views of mortality, are often returning to discompose the peaceful breast.—Thanks be to God that we have so many resting places in it, that he has made the wilderness blossom with so many heavenly comforts.—But there is a perfect and everlasting rest that remains for the people of God in heaven. Jesus is the prince of those regions, and there he is leading all his disciples; there your rest shall be full and perpetual, without any sorrow, without any foe, and where infinite power and love shall guard the happy abodes from every invading evil.

From what has been said, you may justly infer, my young friends, THE PLEASANTNESS OF A RELIGIOUS LIFE.—You naturally love pleasure, and profess to be in the pursuit of it: God forbid that I should put you back, no, come on, my young friends, it is a noble pursuit;

pursuit; no earthly friend can be more earnest in wishing you success, or more ready to assist and direct you in this business.—But let me warn you not to mistake the way of happiness.

—If you seek it in the paths of sin, you will certainly be disappointed: thousands have found these paths the sure road to present and future misery.—If you seek it in sensual pleasures, in riches, in honours, in the vanities of life, there you will be as certainly mistaken; these things can afford nothing but outside appearances of comfort and joy.—The true seat of happiness is the soul, and that they cannot reach.—But Jesus Christ is a friend that loves you better than any other can do; he has done and suffered much to promote your happiness; he knows wherein your true happiness lies, and is best able to secure it to you. He, the friend and lover of your souls, stands here before you marking the path of happiness, and inviting you to walk in it.—*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*—Follow Jesus—imitate Jesus Christ—

pray

pray for the spirit of Jesus Christ;—this will lead you to the truest liberty, to inward peace; to the noblest honours, to eternal life;—*the way is pleasant, and the end is peace.*

You may hence also infer, my young friends, **THE ADVANTAGE OF RELIGION.**—You can never judge of the excellency of the way so well as by considering the end. So let me entreat and charge you to judge of the ways of piety, and the paths of sin; look to their end, and then consider which is to be preferred. *The wages of sin is death:* it commonly leads to shame and dishonour in this life, and it will certainly carry you to the second death, and the misery of hell in another.—But the gift of God is *eternal life* through Jesus Christ our Lord. So gloriously will a life of religion end. To these fair and happy mansions will Christ carry all his disciples, and here he marks the path that leads to them.—*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.*—This is the way; Christ is your pattern, and heaven will be the end.—We beseech you think seriously of these things when

when you are gone from hence ; and venture not a step further in the path of sin till you can come to this bold resolution, to defy the threatenings of Almighty God, to venture on the terrors of eternal death, and to take up your abodes in the torments of hell.

Finally, my young friends, you may hence infer THE EXCELLENCE AND GRACE OF JESUS CHRIST.—Behold him in all the riches of his grace and love, come down from heaven and his Father's bosom, to seek and save your wretched souls.—Behold him writing in the bible his holy precepts and precious promises for your instruction and comfort.—Behold him bleeding and dying on the cross as a sacrifice for your sins.—Behold him clothed with majesty, power, and love, conquering sin, and death, and hell ; releasing miserable and captive souls ; pardoning sin with a boundless profusion of forgiving love ; spreading peace through the believing soul ; strengthening the weak and heavy laden ; sanctifying the unclean and sinful heart ; and leading his followers to joy and happiness.—

Behold

Behold him now sending the invitation of his grace to you. *Come unto me, and I will give you rest.* He stands at the door of your hearts and knocks for admittance, and is ready to enrich you with all these spiritual and eternal blessings.

And now let me beseech you by all the riches of his condescending grace and goodness—by the value of your immortal souls—by all the precious blessings which he has to bestow—by all the glory of the heavenly world—by every thing that you hold dear and valuable, let me entreat you not to turn him away. Open your hearts to receive him, to love, honour, and obey him; this day make a covenant with him, and seriously surrender your souls to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, to be pardoned, sanctified, and saved for ever. Amen.

## HYMN.

THE Saviour offers heavenly rest  
To weary souls with sin distressed;  
The kind, the gracious call obey,  
And cast your gloomy fears away.

Opprest with guilt, a painful load,  
O come and spread your woes abroad;  
Divine compassion, mighty love,  
Will all the painful load remove.

Here Mercy's boundless ocean flows,  
To cleanse your guilt, and heal your woes;  
Pardon, and life, and endless peace—  
How rich the gift! how free the grace!

Dear Saviour, let thy powerful love  
Confirm our faith, our fears remove,  
And sweetly influence ev'ry breast,  
And guide us to eternal rest.

ADDRESS

**ADDRESS III.**

**PART I.**

**THE DIFFICULTIES AND SUPPORTS OF  
RELIGION COMPARED.**

**MATTHEW xi. 30.**

*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

**MY YOUNG FRIENDS,**

YOU have heard of the advantages of Christ's service, and the rest and comfort that it brings to the mind. But you are not to suppose that there is nothing but pleasure and comfort in religion; there are duties and labours, and self-denial, and difficulties, both in the beginning and in the progress of it, which you ought to be well apprized of, but which ought not to discourage you; because the supports and consolations of religion will more than balance those difficulties, and render the yoke of Christ easy, and his burden light.

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When we invite you to Christ's service, we do not invite you to unbounded liberty, to lazy indolence, or licentious practices—God forbid.—You will still have work to do, a burden to bear, and be under a yoke or restraint; but it will be an easy yoke, a light burden, and a pleasant work, compared with any other service in which you can possibly engage.

I would faithfully apprise you, my young friends, of some difficulties that you must surmount at your first entrance on the service of Christ. And they are such as these:

THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM CONSIDERATION, and fixing your thoughts on new and distant objects.—The first step towards the service of Christ is deep and serious meditation. *I thought on my ways* (says David) *and turned my feet to thy testimonies.*—I know the difficulty you will find to think closely and long together on any subject, but especially on your duty to God—your sins against him—on Christ and his requirements—and on death, judgment, and eternity.—We know that advanced Christians sometimes find

it

it difficult to keep their thoughts fixed, and have their hearts affected with these things: and how much more difficult must it be for you who have been so little used to consideration—whose thoughts have been so long accustomed to wander after trifles—and whose lively fancy carries you away after every vanity;—you will find this requires great attention and resolution; and happy, thrice happy is the youth who can say his *heart is fixed* while he thinks on these things.

YOU WILL FIND A STILL GREATER DIFFICULTY IN REGARDING THOSE THINGS WITH AVERSION, WHICH WERE BEFORE THE GREAT OBJECTS OF YOUR DELIGHT, AND DETERMINING TO PART WITH THEM.—Sinful pleasures and indulgencies, though they may shock us at first, yet soon grow familiar and pleasing to our corrupt hearts; and we are easily led to imagine, that the gratification of our appetites and passions is our chief and highest happiness.—You may indeed be brought by the fear of punishment, or the force of education, to restrain yourself from the outward acts of sin, at least from those that are most

notorious and scandalously wicked, as lying, swearing, stealing, sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, and the like; but the gospel requires a great deal more, it insists upon your breaking off every sin; and not only so, but that you should hate them from your heart, and resolve by divine grace that you will never return to them any more.—All old and wicked things must be done away, and all things must become new.

And further, you must be brought to **CONDAMN YOURSELF FOR YOUR PAST DOINGS**; and this is a very humbling and mortifying work.—The gospel demands and insists upon it that we call on our memory to give a just representation of our sins—that we set them in order before us, and view them in all the circumstances of their aggravation—that we compare our sins with the mercies we have received, and the advantages we have been favoured with, and with all the mighty obligations we were under from gratitude, from interest and duty, to a contrary behaviour: and this mortifying consideration must be kept before the eyes till the spirit is humble,

and

and contrite, and broken; till we can confess sin feelingly, and repent of it heartily, and forsake it cheerfully—and admire the mercy and long-suffering of God that he has not long since destroyed us.—Now think how mortifying and humbling this must be to our proud hearts.

And after this, another difficulty rises on your first entrance on Christ's service, and that is THE RELUCTANCE YOU WILL FIND TO RECEIVE MERCY IN THE GOSPEL WAY.—Now the gospel way of pardon, as preached by the Apostles, was repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that eternal life is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.—You may think repentance is necessary, and may wish to go through with it; but when you are told that this will never merit heaven for you, and that you must still receive mercy, and grace, and glory, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ; at this your proud hearts will often recoil, and you will find many a painful struggle before your high thoughts of yourselves are brought low, and Christ is all in

all

all to your souls—all your salvation, and all your desire.

And finally, when all this is done, and all your good resolutions and pious purposes are formed, you will find it **NO EASY WORK TO PUT ALL INTO EXECUTION.**—The Prophet asketh, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots: then, says he, may be that is accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.* He means it is a difficult thing, it will require your full purpose of heart, and great courage, resolution, and perseverance, and a better strength than your own. Nothing less than this will enable you to rise early in a morning, to redeem some time for reading the scriptures, and prayer, before you enter on the work of the day; to break off any evil words you have formerly used, any evil practices you have been guilty of, any evil company you have formerly kept, any evil thoughts or wishes you have had in your hearts, and to enable you to keep the sabbath holy, to improve by the instructions that are given you—to be honest and just in your transactions with men; to fear a lie and speak

the

the truth—and be harmless and blameless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Besides these difficulties at setting out, you will have **SOME DIFFICULTIES THAT WILL ATTEND YOUR CONTINUANCE AND PROGRESS IN RELIGION**:—the christian life is a continual warfare, in which it is not enough to gain a single victory, but we are often to return to the charge, and be always in a posture of defence. The laborious, watchful, conscientious christian, he alone can tell how hard it is *to wrestle with flesh and blood*; and not only so, but *with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places*. While we are in the body, *the flesh will rebel against the spirit*; and there is a law in the members that will war against the law in the mind; we must therefore continually deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ; be controlling our appetites, and keep under our bodies. This was St. Paul's daily work; and notwithstanding his great knowledge and attainments, he found it necessary, *lest having preached to others he himself should be a cast away*.

But

But as these things are not your immediate concern, and as those difficulties will certainly lessen as you grow in grace and improve in holiness, I shall dismiss this part of the subject, with observing, how necessary it is that we should enter on a religious course **IN A BETTER STRENGTH THAN OUR OWN.**—It is on account of all these difficulties, compared with our own weakness and fickleness, and our powerful enemies, that the scriptures are so plain and full in asserting the necessity of divine influence in conversion and reformation. Hence God is said *to work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure, and to begin a good work in us.* Hence Christ declares *that no man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and without me ye can do nothing.* Let me advise you therefore as Paul does Timothy, *my son be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.* If you trust in your own resolutions and strength, they will certainly fail you; but *the grace of Christ is sufficient for you, and ye shall be conquerors, and more than conquerors, through him that loved you.*

I am

I am now to prove to you, my young friends, that notwithstanding all these difficulties in your entrance on a religious life, and in your future progress through the whole of it, yet still the yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light; that the ways of God are pleasantness, and all his paths are peace:—but we will leave this till another opportunity.

## H Y M N.

**S**TRAIT is the way, the door is strait,

That leads to joy on high;

'Tis but a few that find the gate,

While crouds mistake and die.

Beloved self must be deny'd,

The mind and will renew'd,

Passion suppress'd, and Patience try'd,

And vain desires subdu'd.

Flesh is a dangerous foe to Grace,

Where it prevails and rules;

Flesh must be humbled, Pride abas'd,

Lest they destroy our souls.

The tongue, that most unruly pow'r,

Requires a strong restraint:

We must be watchful ev'ry hour,

And pray, but never faint.

Lord! can a feeble, helpless worm

Fulfil a task so hard!

Thy grace must all my work perform,

And give the free reward.

### *A D D R E S S III.*

#### **PART II.**

### **THE DIFFICULTIES AND SUPPORTS OF RELIGION COMPARED.**

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**MATTHEW xi. 30.**

*For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light,*

I meet you again with pleasure, my young friends, to prove to you that notwithstanding all the difficulties that may attend your first entrance on and future progress in the service of Christ, yet his *yoke is easy, and his burden is light*; and this will appear very plain if you **COMPARE THE YOKE OF CHRIST WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS, WHETHER PRETENDED OR REAL.**—The Jewish religion was attended with many painful, expensive, and troublesome ceremonies, from which the religion of Jesus is entirely free. The Mahometan religion is attended with greater difficulties,

difficulties, has more painful rites, and many absurdities and contradictions, and no evidence of reason or miracle to support it. Compare it with the idolatry of Heathens, and it shines with infinitely superior lustre. Almost all of them represent their deities as delighting in cruelty and inhumanity, and yet command them still to be loved and honoured; they represent them as angry, and appeased at a trifle, yet they are to be revered and adored.—Now to love cruelty and barbarity, and to reverence caprice and folly, are things absolutely impossible to any considerate man: it therefore requires impossibilities, and necessitates all its votaries to be either fools or hypocrites.—I will not take up your time now in telling you how many of them require the most unnatural and cruel services, that they approach their gods by cutting themselves with knives and lances; and strive to please their malicious deities with afflicting their bodies, or causing their dear children to pass through the fire to Moloch.—In the gospel there is nothing of all this, therefore Christ's *yoke is easy, and his burden light.*

It is so, further, WHEN COMPARED WITH THE YOKE OF SIN AND SATAN.—Satan would fain persuade young people that a sinful life is a state of true liberty and pleasure, and that religion is a servile and uncomfortable thing.—I have already said that religion lays a restraint upon the passions, checks their impetuous fallies, and brings the will into subjection to the Divine will ; but this is our highest happiness—if the will is brought into subjection to God, the soul lives and is happy—but when it forsakes him, it will fall into subjection to every ungoverned lust and headstrong passion ; and Satan our great adversary, who rides as it were on the passions, and blows up the storm, leads on the soul from one folly and vanity to another, till he makes it captive according to his own will—and then all peace, liberty, and happiness ends.—In his gay moments the sinner still pretends to freedom, though Satan commands him at pleasure, and his lusts lead him to destruction, and he follows them like a slave in chains. He boasts of pleasure, while his inmost soul is tossed to and fro like a troubled sea that cannot rest.

He

He will sometimes put on a gay countenance while conscience, like a living worm, lies gnawing within him. He will sometimes laugh at death and eternity, while within he has a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation ready to devour him.—Such is the yoke of sin and Satan. And surely if religion had ten thousand times more difficulties and restraints than it has, it were infinitely preferable to all this slavery and misery.

Further, the *yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden light*, if you consider THE ASSISTANCE WHICH GOD HAS PROMISED.—Had we been called to the service of Christ, and yet left to ourselves, we might have been led to question whether his *yoke was easy and his burden light*; but this is not the case. I have already shewn you how strongly the scriptures declare the necessity of divine help; and if it is necessary God will certainly give it you. He hath taught us thus to argue, *if ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy spirit to them that ask him.* Christ hath said, *my grace is sufficient for you, and my*

## 48. DIFFICULTIES AND SUPPORTS

*Strength shall be made perfect in your weakness. God is faithful, who hath promised, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear. However weak we are in ourselves, we can do all things through Christ strengthening us.* And now let the difficulties of religion be what they will, let our enemies aggravate them to the highest degree, we will oppose this truth against all their malice, *that in God is our help: we will produce this promise as an answer to all their falsehood: Fear not, I am with thee, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness:—must not then his yoke be easy, and his burden light?*

Further, his service is made easy by THE EXALTED PLEASURES THAT ATTEND IT: it has pleasures in the way, as well as glory in the end; there is a real joy in what appears to sinners the very bondage of religion, I mean in the government of the passions, in correcting evil habits, in subduing vicious appetites, and bringing the thoughts into subjection to Christ. And as to the path of duty, however straight

straight it appears, the closer we walk in it, the more delightful it will be.—The real christian hath pleasure in being good, and doing good. If he feeds the hungry, or clothes the poor, or visits the sick, or instructs the ignorant, or comforts the afflicted, or exhorts the careless, or warns the profane, in these things he has joy superior to any thing the world can afford.—But he has greater pleasures still—in reading the word and promises of God—in the house and ordinances of God—in his family and secret worship—in looking back on the way in which God has led him—in looking inward on the happy change that has been produced in his own mind, and looking forward to another and better world.—These are pleasures which attend religion now, which may be felt to-day, and every day; the world cannot give them, nor take them away:—these delights will follow us to a bed of sickness, and be better than the richest cordials to our drooping spirits; nor can they ever be pursued to excess, the more we enjoy them the more we shall relish them, and the more will the mind

be enlarged to receive them.—Thus the present pleasure of Christ's service makes his *yoke easy, and his burden light.*

It is made still more so, BY THE IMMENSE REWARD THAT WILL ATTEND IT IN ANOTHER WORLD.—I have just shewed you, that, abstracted from all views of a future reward, religion brings such a present income of solid substantial joy, that far overbalances all the pain, and fatigue, and difficulties of it.— But suppose it had no other pleasure than what arises from the hope of glory, even that would be enough to make the *yoke easy, and the burden light.*—For the hope of pleasure, or honour, or gain, what difficulties will not men undergo? though the prospect is uncertain, and the very attainment of them will be short and unsatisfying.—And what are all these things compared with the joys of heaven—with the favour of God—with a crown of glory—an eternal inheritance—a kingdom that cannot be moved—and *a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory?*—Fix your eye, my young friends, attentively on the prize that is

set

set before you, and you will forget what is behind, you will press on towards the mark of the prize, of the high and holy calling which is of God in Christ Jesus.

I shall only add, THAT THE LOVE OF GOD SHED ABROAD IN YOUR HEARTS WILL MAKE THE YOKE EASY, AND THE BURDEN LIGHT INDEED.—Love to God and Christ will overcome all difficulties, and bear down all opposition ; it will make mortification and self-denial change their harsh and dreadful names, and become easy, and sweet, and delightful ; you will then no longer feel the *yoke*, or labour under the *burden*, but you will run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.

I have now given you a true and fair account of the yoke of Christ, and the supports you will have under it, of the whole burden of religion, and the advantages and pleasures that will attend it ; choose you then what you will do, and whom you will serve.—However aged and habitual sinners may be hardened in the neglect of these things, I hope and believe this is not the case with any of you, my young

young friends ; I address you with cheerful hope of success—now is your choosing time—I would fain engage you for Christ and his service. You see how false it is to represent religion as a gloomy and burdensome thing—balance the account now given you in your own mind, and you will soon perceive the pleasures and supports of religion are far superior to its pains and difficulties.—Sinners are the slaves, Christians are the Lord's free-men. It is the men of this world, who have their portion in this life, that are **POOR AND WRETCHED** ; the Christian only is truly **RICH AND HAPPY**. The ways of sin are the ways of sorrow and melancholy ; it is the religion of Jesus Christ that fills the heart with peace and gladness.—What course then will you take, which way will you choose, and whom will you serve ? Satan, or Jesus Christ. Will you choose sin, and misery, and hell ; or Christ, and holiness, and heaven ? Your parents and friends, with eager expectation, wait your answer ; your minister, with tender concern, waits your answer ; angels, who witness our devotion, wait your answer ; and

Jesus,

Jefus, your compassionate and glorious Sa-  
viour, waits your anfwer—his arms are open  
to receive you, and his compassionate voice  
now calls you, saying, *Come unto me ye  
young immortals whom I have redeemed  
with my blood, you will I teach and guide in  
my way, you I will protect and bleſs, to you  
I will give grace and glory, and no good thing  
will I withhold from you;* come then to my  
arms, to my heart, to my service—*my yoke is  
easy, and my burden is light.*—Surely you will  
not refuse; think how much better he can do  
for you than all the world can do—how much  
better he will deal by you than Satan will—  
above all, think how *easy* his *yoke* will be; if  
you take it upon you in early life: if you  
begin now you will remove, in a great mea-  
sure, many of the difficulties that I first  
mentioned.—Vice is like a tree, the longer it  
grows the deeper root it takes, and requires  
more time and strength to be plucked up  
again; but now it may much easier be done.  
Vice is like a river, it increases, and swells,  
and grows larger, the further it proceeds;

if  
opposed

opposed at the beginning, it is then, comparatively, a small stream, and more easily turned aside. Happy they who can make a stand against the torrents of vice at any age; and blessed be God that his grace is sufficient for such at any period of life; but vastly happier are all they who give their hearts early to Christ, and can say in their advanced years, *I thy servant have feared the Lord from my youth; such escape a thousand painful pangs in their entrance on religion; and they proceed with greater steadiness, cheerfulness, and joy.*—Be entreated then to *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.* Go home under the lively impression of these delightful truths, that Christ *will receive you graciously, and love you freely:* and, that *his yoke is easy, and his burden light.*

## HYMN.

“ COME hither all ye weary souls,  
 “ Ye heavy-laden sinners come;  
 “ I’ll give you rest from all your toils,  
 “ And raise you to my heavenly home.

“ They

“ They shall find rest that learn of me—

“ I’m of a meek and lowly mind ;—

“ But Passion rages like the sea—

“ And Pride is restless as the wind.

“ Bleſſ’d is the man whose shoulders take

“ My yoke, and bear it with delight ;

“ My yoke is easy to his neck—

“ My grace ſhall make the burden light.”

Jesus, we come at thy command,

With faith, and hope, and humble zeal, —

Resign our spirits to thy hand,

To mould and guide us at thy will.

### ADDRESS

but to small children left thither by  
the hand of wisdom, seems to call for

## ADDRESS IV.

### RELIGION A MATTER OF FREE CHOICE.

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JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

*Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; but as  
for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

THESE are the words of Joshua, the successor of Moses, and the ruler of Israel: and thus will every pious Israelite and every real Christian express himself through all the distant ages of the world.—Let me point out to you, my young friends, the nature of this pious resolution, some remarkable circumstances that attended it in the case of Joshua, and some obvious and important considerations why you should make it your own.

You see in what light this holy man considered religion, as the SERVICE OF GOD, which

which includes the worship of God, and a life devoted to him. Joshua was one who loved the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honour dwelt: he stately attended at the tabernacle, and remembered the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.

But doubtless he did not confine his worship to the tabernacle, but would often retire from the cares and hurries of his public station to pour out his soul in secret to his Maker, to warm his heart with the contemplation of the divine perfections, and the wonderful appearances of his providence in behalf of himself and his people.

Besides this, it is strongly intimated in the text, that he WORSHIPED GOD WITH HIS FAMILY. He exhorts the people to choose that day whom they would serve, that is, worship, whether the God of their fathers, or the gods of the Amorites; but as as for me and my house, says he, we will serve the Lord, we will worship the true God: though all Israel should forsake him, and turn idolaters, we are determined, though single and alone, to serve and worship him at my house.

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But

But this phrase to *serve the Lord*, is a very comprehensive term, and includes not only worship, but submission to his will and obedience to his commands, besides an humble, reverential, cheerful and faithful, constant and universal regard to his whole will.—It implies a readiness to part with every thing inconsistent with his service—to renounce all other masters and lords who have formerly had dominion over us, and yield ourselves up entirely to God to be what he pleases—to suffer what he appoints—and to do whatsoever he commands.—*As the eyes of a servant are towards his master, so will the eyes of every servant of God be directed to him, saying, Lord teach me what thou wilt have me to do; for whatsoever the Lord our God shall say unto us, that we will do, and be obedient.*—This we know was the language of Joshua both in word and deed, and in this sense the people also understood him, for in their determination to follow his example, they say, *the Lord our God will we serve; and his voice will we obey.*—This was Joshua's view of religion, and I hope, my young friends, you will never lose sight of it.

Fix

Fix it in your mind, that “ divine worship,  
“ from a principle of faith, attended with  
“ cheerful obedience from a principle of love,  
“ is the glorious religion both of the old and  
“ the new testament.”

Once more, all this was with Joshua A MATTER OF FREE CHOICE—he was not compelled to this by any human authority, by worldly hopes or fears—for he was the chief magistrate of the nation, and had all the armies of Israel at his command: nor did he impose it on others, he left it to their own determination, saying to all the people, *choose ye this day for yourselves, without any restraint, whom ye will serve;* for my part I am come to a point in this business, I have chosen the Lord to serve him, and will abide by my choice: you are at liberty to choose for yourselves; *but, whatever your resolution may be, as for me I will serve the Lord.*

That religion is worth nothing, which is not a matter of free choice—it must have its foundation in a conviction of the judgment, in a clear understanding of what God and Christ require from us, what difficulties and

trials we are likely to meet with, and what consolations, and helps, and rewards religion will bestow; we must sit down and count what labours it will cost us, what sacrifices it will cost us even in the most favourable circumstances, and what possibly it MAY cost us in some particular circumstances of temptation or persecution.—Satan would have no subjects if men would but sit down and count the cost, and well consider the poor and low offers which he makes of sensual pleasures in this life, the misery which attends his service, and the wages he gives, which is death. He does all he can to prevent consideration, and drives them on *as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.*

But Christ puts in the fairest claim in the world to us; he would have none engage in his service without seriously weighing his claim, without considering the hardest part of his service: and if his offers are not sufficient to balance these, he would not have them become his subjects blindfold, or contrary to their inclination and better judgment. The Captain of Salvation does not force men into his

his service, they must all be volunteers, or they will never be good and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ.—This is the nature of the resolution in the text, *as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.*

And further, IT WAS THE RESOLUTION OF A GREAT AND NOBLE PERSON, of Joshua the supreme earthly magistrate of Israel, who ruled this mighty people, conquered many nations, drove out many kings, and settled Israel in the Land of Promise: he was a wise counsellor, a great warrior, and an illustrious conqueror; but this was his highest honour—that he *served the Lord.* He was surrounded with enemies, and had all the weight of government on his shoulders, and the land to divide, and the tribes to settle, yet he did not make this a plea, as some would have done, to neglect the service of God in public, or in his family; he knew the greatest and most pressing business of this world would be no excuse with God, for neglecting the more important business of religion.

Further, THIS RESOLUTION WAS FORMED IN A VERY DETERMINED MANNER—I and my

*house will serve the Lord.* I have weighed the matter seriously and attentively; I am convinced he has an indisputable right to my service, that I am under the highest obligations to serve him; that the service he requires is reasonable, easy, pleasant, honourable, and profitable—that he will graciously assist me in the work, accept my services, such as they are, and bountifully reward them. *I will,* therefore, *serve the Lord:* you must choose for yourselves; but though all Israel should forsake him *yet will not I.*—Our resolutions for God, and Christ, and heaven, are worth nothing if they are not formed deliberately and steadfastly, in dependance on divine strength, and with full purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord, though it should cost us our wealth, or friends, our good name, or even life itself. *If any man loveth father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me.*—Further, it was a resolution DECLARED WITH PUBLIC SOLEMNITY.—Joshua was not ashamed of his religion, but boldly and publicly professes it before all the congregation of Israel; though many of them had turned to idols, and others

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of them were inclined to do so.—Many are ashamed of their religion in public places, especially in the midst of a sinful and adulterous generation; but Joshua acted nobly when he made such *a good profession before so many witnesses*. There was something very affecting in his circumstances, he was now past a hundred and ten years old; and after all the goodness God had shewn to Israel in bringing them to Canaan and settling them there, he found some of them inclined to idolatry—he found himself sensibly declining, and seems as if he could not bear to leave the world while any of his people were wavering about the service of God; he, therefore, once more calls them together, and addresses them as a dying magistrate, as a dying friend—who had spent all his life in their service, and was willing to employ his last breath for their good. Me-thinks I see him standing before Israel—his head venerably hoary—his countenance pale—his hands trembling with age—with all the symptoms of approaching dissolution—while, with a faltering voice and most affectionate look, he engages the attention of the surround-

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ing multitude, sets before them the pleasures and advantages of God's service—the fatal consequences of neglecting it; and urges their choice by his own example, which he publicly declares before the assembled congregation on this solemn occasion.—A noble example for us not to be ashamed of our profession; and the more degenerate the day is in which we live, the louder it calls upon us for such an open declaration: thus in the face of all the world to determine for God's service, is noble in itself, pleasing to him, and encouraging to others.

And now let me entreat you, my young friends, to FORM THIS RESOLUTION, THAT YOU WILL SERVE THE LORD.—Follow this noble example of Joshua, and freely and deliberately choose the Lord to serve him.—And here let me beg of you to consider, WHETHER GOD HAS NOT THE MOST JUST CLAIM TO YOUR SERVICE.—Has he not made you what you are, and given you every power and faculty you possess? and is it not highly reasonable that these should be employed in his service, and for his honour?—And as you are

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the creatures of his power, are you not also the children of his care?—Has he not preserved you from your mother's womb? taken care of you in infancy, childhood, and youth, to this very day?—Has he not delivered you from many disorders and many dangers, and supplied all your wants, giving you food and raiment?—Has he not sent his Son to die for you—given his word to instruct you, raised up friends to teach you, and put it into the hearts of ministers to advise and exhort you; and do not they, and some of your parents, at least, *even travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in your souls*; and shall not all these cords of love draw you to him, and the obligations of gratitude bind you to his service for ever?—Do you not consider that *in him you live, and move, and have your being*; that all your health, food, friends, and comforts come from him, and depend on his mercy towards you? How easily, and how justly might he deprive you of them all.—Do not all your future hopes likewise centre in him, both for the blessings of this life, and that which is to come?—Can you find out any other

other person or being who has an equal right to your gratitude and service? The claim of masters, parents, princes, is, comparatively, trifling to the claim that God has to every one of you; and will you rob God of his rights? and withhold from him a creature whom he has made for his service, and redeemed to glorify and honour him?—Would you keep from him a soul and a body which are his, and which he would make happy for ever?—  
*I beseech you therefore by the mercies of God, that you present yourselves to him as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable in his sight, which is your reasonable service; a service which he claims from you, and which you cannot withhold without injustice to yourselves, ingratitude to God, and the most dreadful punishment as the natural consequence of a refusal.*

Consider further, WILL NOT HIS SERVICE BE FOR YOUR PRESENT HONOUR AND HAPPINESS.—He is the greatest, kindest, wisest, and best of masters, and the work he requires of you is nothing like the service of sin—nothing so painful or so disagreeable—his ways are ways of pleasantness, and his paths are peace.

*peace*.—It is the service of the greatest and best of Beings—it is the work in which all the holy men of former and latter ages have been engaged, and in which the saints in heaven and the angels of God are all engaged and happy: are not these things sufficient to dignify the service and make it honourable.

Besides this, IT IS THE ONLY WAY IN WHICH YOU CAN BE HAPPY—you can taste no real joy without it: had you no God to serve you would be a vain wretched creature, and have no business in the world worth living for, and life itself would be a poor contemptible dream—a round, a dull unsatisfying round, of eating and drinking, talking and sleeping, which could not possibly satisfy the mind. You would see nothing about you but what, as you grow up, you must nauseate and despise. Your very reason would be your torment—you would wander disconsolate from one vanity to another, till you could find some place where you may lie down and die: such a poor low miserable life you must lead, if there was no God to serve and glorify; such a miserable life thousands lead *who live as without*

*without God in the world.* But when you see a Being above you, below you, around you, whose eye is ever upon you—a Being of infinite perfections, who made you, supports you, demands your service, and invites you to be happy, who is able, who is willing to make you so—how does this change the scene? it adds importance to every moment, it gives a dignity to our present existence, and holds out to our view an object worthy our highest affection—the favour and friendship of Almighty God.—Here is room for your immortal spirit to expand itself—and from his complacency and love you may draw in such delight and joy that *the world cannot give nor take away.*

I ask you once more, WILL NOT HIS SERVICE BE ATTENDED WITH THE MOST HAPPY CONSEQUENCES FOR EVER? Do you ask wherefore should I serve the Lord, and what profit is it to please him; I answer in the words of the Apostle, *all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours, and ye are Christ's,*

*Christ's, and Christ is God's.* What a glorious inheritance of the Saints is this? nor is this all, *he will guide them by his counsel, and afterwards receive them to glory.* *They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels, and they shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever.* In a word, *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love and serve him,* and which he will freely bestow upon them, not as a reward of their merit, but as the token of his love, as the purchase of a Redeemer's blood, and a proof of the riches of his grace. Since this is the case, may I not hope it will be the language of some of your hearts, *as for me I will serve the Lord:* and so will I, saith another here, and another there—go on, till every heart catches the divine flame, and every soul among you becomes a living sacrifice to God.

But let me once more remind you as Joshua did the Israelites, *ye cannot serve the Lord, that is, ye cannot do it of yourselves;* his grace must assist you, his spirit must bring

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you to the resolution, and strengthen you for the service: and I devoutly pray God *he may put it within you, and cause you to walk in his Statutes and judgments to do them.*—But perhaps you think **IT WILL SPOIL YOUR PLEASURE**; but can you imagine that will spoil your true pleasure, which is the employ and happiness of heaven?—But **YOU WILL BE LOOKED UPON AS SINGULAR**:—this was no objection to Joshua—to be singularly good is your highest honour.—But **SOME WILL LAUGH AT YOUR PIETY AND PRAYERS**—it may be so; but would you be laughed out of an estate in this way? by no means:—and shall the laughter of fools rob you of an eternal inheritance and an immortal crown?—God forbid.—But you **THINK IT TIME ENOUGH YET**; but God says *choose ye this day*—and this is necessary, for you know not that ye shall have another day—*this night your soul may be required of you.*—It is the most convenient day—the youth, the prime, and vigour of life; this is the day of your choice, or choosing day, when you have few cares, and the best opportunity of serving God. The longer you delay it, the more

your difficulties and dangers will increase.—  
*Now is the accepted time, and this is the day of salvation. To-day, therefore, if you will bear his voice, barden not your hearts; now is the time to choose the Lord to serve him; or it is probable you will for ever neglect him—and then he will cast you off for ever.*

## HYMN.

MY gracious Lord, I own thy right  
 To ev'ry service I can pay;  
 And call it my supreme delight  
 To hear thy dictates, and obey.

What is my being—but for thee  
 Its sure support, its noblest end?  
 Thy ever-smiling face to see,  
 And serve the cause of such a friend.

I would not breathe for worldly joy,  
 Or to increase my worldly good;  
 Nor future days or pow'r's employ,  
 To spread a sounding name abroad.

'Tis to my Saviour I would live,  
 To him who for my ransom dy'd—  
 Nor could untainted Eden give  
 Such bliss as blossoms at his side.

His work my hoary age shall bless,  
 When youthful vigour is no more:  
 And my last hour of life confess  
 His love hath animating pow'r.

## ADDRESS V.

### MARY'S CHOICE OF THE GOOD PART.

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LUKE X. 42.

*Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

AND who is there among you who does not approve of Mary's choice? who is there among you that will not imitate her example?—But let us hear the little story to which the words belong:—As our Lord was going about in the execution of his ministry on earth, he called at Bethany, at the house of his friend Lazarus, who, with his two sisters, Martha and Mary, appear to be devout Israelites, waiting for the salvation of God, and were willing to receive Jesus Christ as his Messiah. Jesus, we see, carried with him the pious thoughts and labours of a preacher of righteousness wherever he went, and, therefore, preached

preached the doctrine of his kingdom in the parlour, and to the family of his friends. Mary, one of the sisters of Lazarus, we are told, sat at the feet of Jesus Christ, to hear his words, that is, continued among those who attended on the conversation and discourses of Christ; but Martha, who was the mistress of the family, was providing an entertainment for her friends, and being fatigued, and somewhat displeased with the employment, she came to Jesus with a sort of accusation against him, as well as her sister: *Lord, says she, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? send her therefore away from the company, that she may help me.* To which Jesus replies in those gentle, endearing, and yet reprobating words, *Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her.* — In which words our Lord strongly expresses the importance of religion, calling it *the one thing needful*, that is, needful above every other business or concern: he also insinuates in the most friendly

friendly and gentle manner to Martha, that a great solicitude and anxiety about the business and troubles of the world, are generally prejudicial to it, hindering the improvement of the soul in religion, preventing our attendance on the means of it, and frequently hurting and discomposing the religious temper of our minds. After which, he makes an handsome apology for Mary in the words I have just read to you, *Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her*—do not be offended at her, ~~she~~ is attending to her best interests, her mind is impressed, her heart is affected with them, and to this it is owing that she has neglected what you think is her duty; but for this reason you ought, at least, to forgive her; nay, she deserves to be commended and imitated.—From the example of this young person, and our Lord's commendation of her, let me offer a few serious and important truths to your consideration, my young friends.—Her name is recorded with honour in the book of God, and will be handed down to future generations. And, if you imitate her example, your name also will be honoured in the

the church—will be recorded among your posterity—and not only so, but your name shall be written in *the Lamb's book of life* for ever.

Here let us consider what was THE OBJECT OF HER CHOICE—her choice was RELIGION, the things that belonged to her spiritual interest and everlasting welfare: she was willing to embrace and improve every opportunity of increasing her knowledge of religion, cherishing a pious disposition, and improving her mind in holiness and goodness; she valued the ornaments of the mind more than those of the body, and was principally concerned to adorn herself with the graces of meekness, love, humility, and piety, to secure the favour of God and the happiness of heaven; for this purpose she loved to attend upon the discourses of Christ, to hear those lessons of divine and heavenly wisdom which he taught, and received with humility, with relish, and delight, all the *gracious words that came from his lips.* And from what we read of this agreeable young person in *John xi. 1.* in the account of her brother's sickness, death, and resurrection, she appears to have had a very amiable

amiable disposition, great tenderness of temper, and an eminent degree of piety.—This is supposed to be the same Mary who afterwards anointed our Lord with precious ointment; and whose name he has, on that occasion, marked with great and immortal honour. She, therefore, not only made religion her early choice and care, but she grew and improved in it, and became a person of eminent piety in a little time. There is no person of whom Christ has spoken with more honour.—Hence it appears that religion was the great object of this young person's choice—it was the great concern of her mind, and the highest business of her life.

And here, my young friends, let me engage your attention for a few minutes to THE WISDOM OF HER CHOICE; and this appears from her choosing THE GOOD PART, that which is good by way of eminence, and, compared to which, nothing else could be so called.—It is certainly a wise conduct, and a proof of a good understanding, to choose the best portion, and give it a preference to all other things. Now religion is certainly the best portion, and  
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the highest good, because it promotes the welfare of the highest and most valuable part of our natures—it is life to the soul—it enriches and adorns the mind—it purifies the heart—it sanctifies our natural passions and affections—it improves the understanding with the highest and best knowledge, the knowledge of God, and Christ, and holiness, and heaven—it will gain us the esteem of the wisest and best men—it will qualify us to fill up every station in social life with honour and advantage—it will make us useful in the world, incline us to do good, and teach us how to do it.—A pious youth or a pious young woman spread comfort and delight wherever they go, and are blessings in every station of life.—Religion calms and suppresses all uneasy and troublesome passions—it fills the mind with peace, enriches it with the joys of devotion, with communion with God and heavenly hopes—it secures the favour and love of God, and will draw down his blessing upon us in every circumstance. In short, religion enriches every other comfort and enjoyment. Knowledge, riches, power, and health, without piety

piety and virtue, are vain and unprofitable things; but when in the possession of a pious mind, and directed by religion, they are real comforts and happy means of usefulness: on all these accounts Mary shewed great wisdom in chusing religion—it was the choice of a thinking, discerning mind, directed by sound wisdom and discretion.

And her wisdom further appears in this, that **IT WAS THE GOOD PART WHICH SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AWAY FROM HER.**—She could not but see that many other things made a greater figure, and were more generally chosen, especially by young persons, like herself, in the genteel walk of life, such as riches, honours, and the pleasures and gaieties of the world; but then she saw that all these were perishable things—some dying away of themselves, others might be taken from her, or she be snatched from them by the hand of Death; there was nothing certain, nothing satisfying in all these things: on this account she preferred the favour of God, the pleasures of devotion, the purity of the mind, and the joys of heaven before them all. She knew these pleasures would

would attend her in health, visit her in sickness, support her in poverty, and walk with her through the dark valley of the shadow of death itself: yea they would accompany her into the presence of God, and fit her for the enjoyment of Christ, the company of angels, and the friendship of good and happy spirits made perfect for ever.—And in this point her wisdom is evident—every one must commend her judgment and approve her choice: and what is more than all, SHE HAD THE APPROBATION OF CHRIST, he commended her choice—and this proves it to be a wise and good one. *Mary, faith he, has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her:* and you must allow the Son of God to be an infallible judge; he knows the value of those immortal souls he came to redeem, he knows the importance of that religion which he came from heaven to teach—of that holiness which he has recommended to us with so much labour and zeal. He came from heaven, and therefore he well knows the happiness of God's favour, and the glory and felicity which he will bestow on the righteous in the heavenly world. His judgment is according

according to truth—and the day is coming when he will judge the world, and then his judgment in all things shall be final and decisive in the most absolute degree: and then, my young friends, it will not matter what ignorant and foolish mortals may say of us, though they should condemn us, and call us fools and madmen—it is by the judgment of God we must stand or fall—if he approves, commends, and accepts us, all will be well.

And now give me leave, my young friends, to apply these words of Christ, and what has been said upon them, to you in particular—it should be your business to apply them to yourselves—to consider Christ as speaking them in your hearing, and recommending the example of this wise, virtuous, and pious young person to your imitation.—Let me beg of you to turn your thoughts upon your own hearts, and inquire **WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE, AND HOW YOU ARE PURSUING IT?** There are some persons who seem to stand up, and say aloud before God and all the world, that they prefer the riches, honours, and pleasures of this life, before every thing else,

else; that they choose these for their portion, and resolve to pursue them; that in comparison with these all the great things of God, and religion, and another world, are nothing; not worthy of their care or thought:—but surely this is not, and I hope never will be, the case with any of you. Such a wretched choice may be made in youth, in health, in prosperity, and when the world smiles upon them; but suppose the world to frown, suppose them poor, or sick, or dying, and in the full view of eternity—then I am sure their hearts will fail them, and they will think their choice a foolish one indeed.—I have attended many a dying bed, and always found them the greatest cowards who, in health and prosperity, pretended to laugh at religion, or who put it off to sickness or old age.—Some pretend to choose religion and God's favour for their happiness, merely to quiet their consciences, crying *peace, peace, to themselves, when there is no peace*, because they do not act suitable to this choice: they call on God with their mouths, and honour him with their lips; but their hearts are far

from him. Such persons are not cheating God, for he cannot be deceived; nor cheating their fellow-creatures, for they can generally see through their hypocrisy; but they are cheating their own souls, and going down to destruction with a lie in their right hand. I hope in God this will never be your case. Inquire then, as in the presence of God, what choice you have hitherto made; be assured *where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also*—and where your hearts are, there will your thoughts, your affections, your hopes, your desires be. Where are these fixed? where do they most cheerfully, and freely, and habitually run? is it on the world, on the changing perishing world? or is it on religion, and on that good part which shall never be taken from you? The manner in which your conscience answers this question will determine whether you have chosen Mary's better part or not.—And you cannot put it too closely to yourselves.

O ye virgins, ye youths, let me engage you to join with this pious young Mary, to  
choose

choose a part which is so good in itself, which is the *one thing needful*, which secures the peace and happiness of your souls, the favour of God and Christ here, and the glory of heaven hereafter—a portion which nothing can hinder you of, nothing destroy or take away from you for ever—which your own conscience approves, which all good men approve, which Jesus Christ approved while on earth, and which he will surely approve, and crown with glory and honour, when he comes as the Judge of all. I know you will be tempted to defer this choice, or to renounce this choice—the pleasures of the world will tempt you to this—the men of the world will tempt you to this—Satan will tempt you to it—your own corrupt minds will sometimes suggest inclinations that way; but look at young Mary, she stood resolved to hearken to none of these things. How great and good, how amiable, and wise, and noble, does she appear first sitting at the feet of Jesus—afterwards expressing her faith in Christ's power, when her brother was dead—then openly anointing the head of Jesus

with rich perfume, in the face of his enemies. How great is her name in the scriptures—how great is her honour and reward in heaven.—Stand resolved then to hearken to none of these things—resolution will do much to silence your tempters and baffle their designs: above all, God will help you; *the grace of Christ shall be sufficient for you, his strength shall be made perfect in your weakness, and through him ye shall be more than conquerors.*—What, renounce your choice, and turn again to folly—God forbid!—tell every one that hints such thoughts to you, that God led you to this choice, that you feel comfort in it, that you know happiness will result from it, and that you are determined, with God's help, to abide by it for ever.—Be entreated now to sit with humility and attention at the feet of your pious parents or friends, at the feet of your teachers, at the feet of your ministers. This is a good beginning, and, through grace, it will lead you on to Mary's choice, to Mary's honour, and, finally, to Mary's crown. Amen.

H Y M N.

## HYMN.

BESET with snares on every hand,  
In Life's uncertain path I stand :  
Saviour divine, diffuse thy light,  
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.

Engage this roving treach'rous heart,  
To fix on Mary's better part ;  
To scorn the trifles of a day  
For joys that none can take away.

Then let the wildest storms arise,  
Let tempests mingle earth and skies ;  
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,  
But all my treasures with me bear.

If thou, my Jesus, still be nigh,  
Cheerful I live, and joyful die :  
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,  
To find ten thousand worlds in Thee.

## H 3 ADDRESS

ADDRESS VI.

YOUNG PEOPLE EXHORTED TO BE WISE,  
FROM THE JOY IT WILL GIVE THEIR  
PARENTS.

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PROVERBS xxiii. 15.

*My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart  
shall rejoice, even mine.*

GOD gave Solomon wisdom above all the children of men;—and one evidence of it was, that he took so much pains to promote the wisdom and happiness of young people:—in order to this he tries various methods with them; he sometimes warns and reproves them—sometimes persuades and beseeches them—and in the words I just read, he addresses them in the most affectionate manner, representing how much joy it would give him to see them wise.—Maxims of this kind

kind he often repeats in the book of *Proverbs* ; and he does it very feelingly.—And hence we may observe (as a foundation for my present address to you, my young friends), that **IT IS THE GREATEST JOY TO PIous PARENTS TO SEE THEIR CHILDREN WISE AND PIous.** Thus the Apostle John says, *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.*

Let me just point out to you **WHEN YOUNG PERSONS MAY BE SAID TO HAVE WISE HEARTS.**

Wisdom consists in choosing right ends, and pursuing those ends by proper means.—A wise heart is a heart well-instructed, and taught to discern between good and evil, and furnished with the best principles ; it is a pious heart that fears God, maintains prayer, delights in studying the scriptures, and attending divine ordinances ; it is a thoughtful, sober heart that governs the appetites and passions, and acts agreeably to the law of reason and conscience ; it is a heart obedient to parents and other superiors, and benevolent and friendly to all ; it is prudent and discreet—  
watchful

watchful over its conduct—disposed to judge of the proper time and manner of speaking and acting.—So Solomon adds in the next verse, *yea, my reins shall rejoice when thy lips speak right things.* It is an heart that is fixed and steady—resolved for God and religion—and watchful against every temptation that might turn it aside.—In short, *the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understanding.* This is meant, my young friends, by a wise heart.

Let me now shew you WHY IT WILL GIVE SUCH JOY TO YOUR PIous PARENTS AND FRIENDS, IF YOUR HEARTS ARE THUS WISE.—And here I beg of you to consider that they will rejoice that THEY ARE NOT DISAPPOINTED IN YOU, in the pains they have taken with you, and the expectations they have entertained from you. Your parents were pleased with the health of your constitutions, and the dawn and progress of reason; they looked upon you with great delight, and often said, *this shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands.* They cultivated your minds with care, diligence, and tenderness; they

they reasonably expected that this their cultivation should answer their wishes, and that the fruits of wisdom and righteousness should appear in you. When they do so, they rejoice *that they have not laboured in vain, nor spent their strength for nought.* THEY REJOICE THAT THEIR CARES AND ANXIETIES ARE GREATLY LESSENED. Your parents have had many weighty cares concerning your health, and education, and disposal in life; the concerns of a growing family have hung heavy upon their minds; but if you have wise hearts it will lessen their burdens, they will be easy when you are out of their sight—free, in a great measure, from their tormenting fears and suspicions of your getting into bad company, and their hearing evil tidings of you. They will not be ashamed of introducing you into such company as they choose and value, believing that you will know when to be silent, and when to speak, and will only *speak right things.* They will be easy when you are removed to a distance from them, from a persuasion that you fear God, and will act as under his eye, when

when you are out of the reach of theirs. When they see you sick or languishing, or should hear that you are so, it will be their comfort that there has been *in you some good thing towards the Lord your God*; and that you are not entirely unprepared for death and eternity.—Your wisdom will be the support of their declining years, and will soften their dying beds. They will think nothing too much which they have done for you; and will cheerfully say with the good old Patriarch, *I die; but God will surely visit you.*

They will rejoice in your wisdom, as **IT WILL BE A SECURITY FOR YOUR GOOD BEHAVIOUR TO THEM AND THE WORLD**; they will reasonably conclude, that you will always reverence their instructions, consult their comfort, and not despise them when they are old. They will conclude that, having been wise and dutiful children, you will make good husbands and wives, parents, masters, and mistresses; that you will be loving relations, faithful friends, good neighbours, worthy citizens—and contribute to the happiness of your country and the world: that you will fill

fill up your places in the church, be the ornament and support of religion, and the comfort and joy of your ministers—and train up your posterity in the fear, love, and service of God.

Once more, IT GIVES THEM THE MOST AGREEABLE HOPES OF YOUR HAPPINESS FOR BOTH WORLDS.—They desire your happiness, and they know that nothing can secure it but true religion. If they are wise themselves, they well know that wealth can never make you happy.—They rejoice to think that you will not barter the pleasures of a good conscience and the favour of God, for the wealth and honours of this world ;—they rejoice to think that you will find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.— Enjoy that peace which the world cannot give, and not be tempted to rove abroad for pleasure, having it at home and within yourselves. In reading, meditation, and prayer—in conversing with wise men, and the blessed God.—It will afford them joy, even in death, to think they leave you walking in God's ways, and under the guidance and protection of the Almighty—

Almighty—they will look forward with raptures of joy to that better world, where they hope to meet you again, and see you standing at Christ's right hand amongst his servants, and to present you to God *as the children whom he hath graciously given them*, and to have their eternal happiness increased by sharing it with you. And they will say with the Apostle, *what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing! are not even ye in the presence of Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy.*—Thus if your hearts are wise, your parents hearts will rejoice that they are not disappointed in you—that their cares and anxieties are lessened—that you give such security for your good behaviour to them and to the world—and that they have such hopes of your happiness for both worlds.

And now I beseech you consider **HOW STRONG A MOTIVE THIS SHOULD BE TO YOU TO BE WISE**—to get and to keep wisdom. You should endeavour that they may thus rejoice in you, **IN GRATITUDE TO THEM.**—Children are commanded (in *1 Timothy v. 4.*) *first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents, for that is*

*is good and acceptable to God.* And how can you requite them better than by being wise and good? their happiness will be, in a great measure, determined by your character and conduct.—Consider what great pains they took in nursing, rearing, and providing for you; how many years were employed in this work before you were capable of making any return: and should you not make them the best you are able? Consider what expence they have been at to maintain you—how often they have watched over you when you have been sick and languishing, and how many wearisome days and sleepless nights they have had upon your account, and a thousand anxieties which none knew but themselves. If they are pious parents, think what pains they have taken to have you instructed and taught to read; and have brought you to the house of God, and poured out prayers, and supplications, and tears, on your account: if your parents have not done this, yet some of your friends, your teachers, your ministers have.—Now has not all this shewn their love to you? how near you lie to their hearts; and

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the sincerity, the tenderness, and depth of their concern for you. And what return do they desire or expect for all this? only that you be wife.—And is it nothing to you whether you be a joy or a grief to them? Would you not rather wish to appear amiable in their eyes, than in the eyes of all the world besides? What excited them to all this was the hope that you would be wife; and will you disappoint them herein? you must in that case be utterly destitute of all gratitude and ingenuity.—That celebrated divine, Mr. Hooker, used often to say, “ he “ loved his mother so dearly, that he would “ endeavour to be good for her sake, as much “ as for his own.”—Let me add, that another motive should be **A REGARD TO YOUR OWN INTEREST AND HAPPINESS.**—*If thou be wise*, says Solomon, *thou wilt be wise for thyself*; it will be for your own benefit; it will give you the highest satisfaction that you lightened their burdens, and requited their care and anxiety. What gives them joy will give you joy too. And if you can at once make them happy and yourselves also, how monstrous must it be

be not to attempt it.—Let me remind you, that you may live to be parents yourselves; and if your hearts be wise, you will be qualified to instruct your children—and then you may hope they will grow up to be comforts to you, and supports of your old age. But who can expect comfort from their children in the decline of life, who never administered any to their parents? Consider likewise that, before you can be parents, **YOU MAY BE SUMMONED TO THE BAR OF GOD**, and he himself may avenge the injury you have done to your parents:—on the other hand, if you rejoice the heart of your parents, **YOU MAY REASONABLY EXPECT HIS FAVOUR AND BLESSING.**—God hath exhorted you to honour *your father and mother*; and commanded in his law, that the child who *cursed his parents*, or even railed against them, *should be put to death*. To honour and comfort your parents is so important a duty, that God will bountifully reward those that practise it.—What rejoices the hearts of your pious parents, will please God your heavenly Father. And you will certainly find that

godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Consider the force of these arguments, and then say, whether you ought not to be wise and holy—out of gratitude to your parents, and from a regard to your own interest and happiness.

From what I have been saying to you, it appears that foolish, obstinate young people have great reason to be humbled and ashamed; and I am afraid I am speaking to some such, who are forgetful of God, and negligent about their own souls; who live without serious prayer—forsake the instructions of their fathers, and will not hear the advice of their mothers; but are often disobedient and rebellious, and *companions of fools*. I look with pity upon such, and have very little hopes of succeeding in any application to them.—But let me remind you, young sinners, that YOUR CASE IS DEPLORABLE AND HAZARDOUS:—your parents, or teachers, or religious friends, are mourning over you in secret—lamenting before God your folly and guilt, and entreating the pity and prayers of their friends on your account.— And is this  
your

your return for all their care and tenderness—to be as a sword in their bowels: do you thus requite your parents and teachers?—*O foolish children and unwise!*

Let it have some weight with you to think that WHILE YOU ARE GRIEVING THEM, YOU ARE OFFENDING GOD—while you are rebelling against their authority, you are rebelling against his—and while you are destroying their comfort, you are destroying your own souls.—You may now think it is your wisdom to throw off the restraints of religion and family government, and to be fond of companions who will laugh at any scruple of conscience that remains in you, and persuade you to despise what the old people say; but you will mourn at the last, and be glad of their pity and prayers when you cannot have them. The day is coming when God will wipe away from your parents eyes all the tears they have shed over you, and charge to your account all the sorrows and anguish you have brought upon them; then they will be comforted, and you will be tormented—your folly

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and iniquity will be exposed to the whole world, of angels and of men, and you will be cast down into hell.—To-day, therefore, while it is called to-day, hear their voice, and the voice of God speaking by them, and consider your ways ; and may God be merciful to you, and pluck you as brands out of the burning.

But I will turn from you to those wise and pious youths WHO ARE DESIROUS TO REJOICE THE HEARTS OF THEIR PARENTS.—Ye worthy youths, persevere and endeavour daily to grow wiser and better. I hope I am addressing some such—and what thanks can we render to God for such a hope ; yea, what thanks shall we render to you, for the pains you have taken to become wise, and for all the satisfaction we have in any of you.—Let me entreat you so to proceed and behave, *that our joy may be full.* If you are wise, you will be sensible that such an exhortation is needful.—We have had the grief to see some that were once promising and hopeful, returning to folly—our pleasing expectations have been disappointed, and our labours for them in vain ;—

vain ;—may it never be the case with you : let not your goodness be as the morning cloud and as the early dew, that soon passeth away.—Remember how much room there is for you to increase in wisdom, and apply your minds closely to it.—Conceit is the ruin of more hopeful youths than any thing else.

Consider by what means you are likely to grow wiser, and use those means diligently ; the one is THE DAILY READING AND STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES, *which are able to make you wise unto salvation* : another is DAILY SERIOUS PRAYER, that God would give you wise and understanding hearts, and preserve you from the vices and the follies of the world : another is CONSTANT WATCHFULNESS over your own hearts, to keep your conscience tender, and prevent the entrance of sin : another is GOOD COMPANY AND ACQUAINTANCES—*they that walk with wise men shall be wise ; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*—Remember every new year, and place, and station, has its new and peculiar snares ; be upon your guard against them,

and

and *ask wisdom of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not.*

Let me exhort you likewise to guard against a fondness for diversion and amusements, especially those that are fashionable—by these you will contract a levity of temper—your souls will be drawn down to sense, and indisposed for communion with God and rational and divine pleasures. Watch also against an imprudent and indiscreet conduct; put a guard upon your lips, and let your mouth *speak right things.* To excite you to this care and watchfulness, let me once more remind you how much the comfort of your parents and friends depends upon your behaviour:—I remember Plutarch says, “ It is wicked and “ ungodly for children, not only to grieve “ their parents, but not always to be saying “ or doing something that will gladden their “ hearts.”

To conclude, my dear young friends, your parents cannot rejoice more than we your teachers and friends shall do, if your hearts are wise. It is impossible to express our joy, when we hear that you act wisely; or our grief, when we hear evil tidings of you.

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If you think then that we deserve any thing at your hands, you know how to shew it: if there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye our joy, that ye may be harmless and blameless, the children of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

## HYMN.

SEE the fair structure Wisdom rears,  
Her messengers attend;  
And, charm'd by her persuasive voice,  
To her your footsteps bend.

“ Hear me, ye simple ones,” she cries,  
“ That lur’d by Folly stray,  
“ And languish to eternal death  
“ In her detested way.

“ Enter my hospitable gate,  
“ And all my banquet share;  
“ For heav’ly wine surrounds my board,  
“ And angels food is there.

“ Freely of ev’ry dainty taste,  
“ Taste, and for ever live;  
“ And mingle with these joys, the hopes  
“ Of all a God can give.”

ADDRESS

## A D D R E S S VII.

EARLY PIETY RECOMMENDED, FROM THE  
TENDER CONCERN OF MINISTERS FOR  
THE RISING GENERATION.

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GALATIONS iv. 19.

*My little children, of whom I travail in birth  
again until Christ be formed in you.*

DURING the absence of Paul, the Galatians fell into many errors, both in principles and practice, which gives the Apostle reason to say in the beginning of this epistle, *that some were removed from him that bad called them, into another gospel, into sentiments very different from what he had taught them.*—And in the third chapter he thus addresses them, *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?* Their present circumstances obliged him

him to speak thus freely, and even severely: but he tells them, he desired to change his voice, and speak to them in a different manner; and in the text he does change it into the most tender, the most affectionate strains—into language which every faithful minister would wish to use, especially when addressing the younger part of his congregation.—*My little children*, says he, *of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you*:—whether the words, *my little children*, refer to the age of the persons, or to the affection the Apostle bore them, is but of little consequence. In both senses, the Christian minister may use the expression, when addressing the young people of his charge.

We assure you we have a great affection for you; we long to do you good, to find a way to the softer passions of your souls, and tell you, *my little children*, in the most tender and affectionate manner, how deeply we are concerned for your eternal interest, and how *we travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you*.

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Let me explain to you the meaning of these words, CHRIST FORMED IN YOU.—By the word CHRIST, is not meant the person of Christ, nor directly the spirit of Christ; but it most strictly and evidently means the IMAGE and TEMPER of Christ: and this must BE IN YOU. It is not enough to profess to wear this image, nor merely to put on the outward shew of this temper; but the image of Christ must be drawn UPON YOUR HEARTS. Your mind must be *delivered into the mould of the gospel*; and the text intimates, that this is a GRADUAL WORK—as an infant is gradually formed in the womb.—The beginning of real religion, or the Christian spirit and temper, is often very small; but it grows under the culture of the word and ordinances, meditation, faith, and prayer—till every grace is formed, every virtue strengthened, and it is brought forth *a child of God*: after this it is STILL PROGRESSIVE.—So another Apostle addresses some as *babes* in Christ, some as *young men*, and some as *fathers*.—The expression of *Christ formed in you*, may be illustrated by the Apostle's own words (*Colossians i. 27.*), *Christ in you the*

*the hope of glory*; that is, the spirit of Christ and all its fruits. The temper and image of Christ is in all christians, and is the solid foundation on which their hope of glory is built.—Thus the Apostle speaking of the change that was made in his own heart, (Gal. ii. 20.) says, *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*; which refers to a continued holy temper and life, supported by the promises and spirit of Christ, confirmed by his covenant, and directed to his glory. The spirit of Christ disciplines the christian's heart, makes him like his Lord, and has a powerful influence to regulate every action and thought according to his precepts and example.—And hence it is, *that he that is joined to the Lord by faith, is said to be one spirit* with him: they have the same principle of love to God and love to man prevailing in their heart as Christ had; they have the same views of the evil of sin, of the vanity of the world, and the importance of eternal things; they mutually love and hate the same things; in short, as the Apostle wishes, *the same mind is in them which*

*was also in Christ Jesus.*—These things in the beginning are feeble, weak, and imperfect, but they *desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby*; having such a perfect pattern as Christ always before their eyes, they see more of the imperfection of their love and obedience than any other persons in the world, and are ever ready to confess, with grief and shame, *that they have not already attained, nor are already perfect*; yea, that they are *unprofitable servants*, and that *it is of the Lord's mercy that they are not consumed*. They seek pardon and justification not as the Galatians did, *by the works of the Law*, but *by faith in Jesus Christ*; and they cordially acknowledge *that by grace they are saved, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God*.—Thus they are *clothed with humility*, they rest their hope of salvation on Christ alone; nevertheless they desire, and pray, and endeavour *to be in the world as Christ was in the world, and to walk as he walked*. They see and admire his wisdom and prudence—his meekness, humility, and patience—his devotion,

votion, love, and zeal; and long to put on Christ—to have all these things in them, and abound more and more.—This is the christian temper, this is to have Christ formed in the soul, this is the great thing we wish for you, our young friends—and for this, we even travail in birth again—feel the utmost anxiety that Christ may be thus formed in your souls.

Let me now lay before you a few of those reasons, why we so earnestly wish that this may be the case with you:—and we desire it (in the first place), because unless it is so, **YOU WILL BE VERY UNHAPPY CREATURES HERE AND FOR EVER.**—Hear and consider these awful words of St. Paul (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) *know ye not how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* persons disapproved and rejected of God. And what a dreadful thing would this be.—*If ye have not the spirit of Christ, ye are none of his.* Whose then must ye be?—dreadful alternative!—*ye are of your father, the devil, if you do his works.*—If Christ be not in you, if you have not his temper and spirit, you are under the power and influence of corrupt passions and de-

praved principles, which will probably lead you on to all excess of riot and wickedness; or, if you are under some restraint at present, which keeps you from being openly wicked, yet an inward consciousness that you neither fear nor love God, that you neither honour nor obey Christ, and that your heart is averse to holy duties, and prone continually to all evil; this, I say, if you do not violently overbear the voice of conscience, will disquiet and grievously torment you in this world; and, in a little time, Death will remove you to the abodes of misery in another world, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*—Being fully persuaded that this will be the case with every one who has not Christ formed in them, we cannot but earnestly wish that they may escape this misery, whether young or old, whether we know them or know them not; but we are particularly concerned for you WITH WHOM WE ARE ACQUAINTED:—if any temporal calamity befalls you, we feel more for you than we do for STRANGERS. If you meet with accidents or losses, or lie under sickness or pain, if it be

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but for a few days, we feel for you, and wish to remove your burdens; but as your souls are infinitely more precious in themselves, so we hope they are more precious in our esteem than any temporal concern—the loss of them can never be repaired. Our most anxious concern is, that they may be saved from eternal ruin.—We enjoy your friendship, you treat us with respect; we study, and preach, and pray for you, and you attend our ministrations; these things form a very intimate connection between us. And can we after this, be unconcerned for you? Can we see, or only fear, that any of you are going on in the broad way that leads to death, and not be affected by it? Do we see you mispending your sabbaths, keeping bad company, neglecting your bible, unaffected with our admonitions, and rejecting the counsel of God against yourselves? And do we expect one day to be called to witness against you at the bar of God, and to testify that we have called, but ye have refused to hear and obey?—The most distant apprehension that such a scene as

this may possibly take place between any of you and us, who are your ministers and friends, must give inexpressible pain to a tender mind. Only to suspect that this may be the case is very shocking. But *unless Christ be formed in you*, we certainly know that it will be the case—therefore are we so anxiously concerned for you, so affectionately address you, and even *travail in birth again till Christ is formed in your souls*. And we do this (secondly) BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT NOTHING ELSE WILL DO INSTEAD OF THIS.—Perhaps you are children of pious parents; but this will not save you without *Christ is formed in your souls*.—Perhaps you have been well instructed, and know more than others; but this will not save you without a sanctified heart, it will only aggravate your guilt and condemnation: *for if you know your Lord's will, and do it not, then shall ye be beaten with many stripes*.—Perhaps some of you go farther than this, and attend the outward forms of religion, avoid bad company, bad words, and places of ill report.—It may be you can talk about religion, and often say your prayers; but even this,

this, without the temper of Christ, will not save you. Have you not heard of those who call upon God with their mouths, and honour him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him.—You may have had convictions of conscience, and fears of everlasting misery; or impressions of joy and pleasure—and have heard the word gladly; but this will not save you, without the temper of Christ: for many receive the word with joy, and promise great things; but having no root in themselves, no inward, real, and fixed principle of piety and love to God and Christ, they soon wither and die away.—And, therefore, though we are glad of any appearance of religion which we see in you, and rejoice in your regular attendance on our instructions, and in every thing amiable in your temper and conduct, yet we cannot rest satisfied with these things only; but travail in birth again till Christ be formed in your souls.

We are (thirdly) peculiarly concerned for you, because WE KNOW YOU ARE IN GREAT DANGER OF NEGLECTING CHRIST AND RELIGION.—We know the danger arising from

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a corrupt heart and depraved dispositions. We know that childhood and youth are generally devoted to vanity; we see a certain levity of mind in young people, which often prevents the good effect of religious instructions.—We are sensible of the many evil examples you are surrounded with, and what a sad influence these are likely to have upon you.—We know your aversion to be thought singular and precise; how present things strike your mind, and how apt you are to reckon upon many future years, in which you may have time enough to attend to your souls and another world.—We see you surrounded with snares, and dangers, and temptations. The hearts of parents and of ministers almost tremble to think on what a stormy sea you are entered, and of the rocks on which you may split. We are often, therefore, in the greatest anxiety that Christ may be formed in you, and that you may have a safe pilot to steer you into the haven of eternal rest and peace.

And we know (fourthly) that YOUTH IS A  
TIME WHEN THIS GREAT BUSINESS IS FRE-  
QUENTLY

QUENTLY DONE.—Some indeed are called at the *eleventh hour*—and one thief found mercy upon a cross; but it is only like one in a thousand, to keep the humble penitent from despair.—*Youth* is generally the time when *Christ is formed in the soul*; and we earnestly wish it may be the case with you, for if it be not done now, we fear it never will be done: we see *your life* to be *as uncertain as a vapour*, *as the flower of the field* it flourisheth; but *the wind passeth over it, and it is gone*. But if it should be continued, we know the longer you neglect religion, the more evil habits will be strengthened, and the world will get faster hold of you; and that in all probability you will live without *Christ all your days*—and at length die as a fool dieth, without *God* and without *hope*.—That text which you find in *Prov. xxix. 1.* gives us many an aching heart, when we look on those of you whom we have so often exhorted in vain: *he that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*.

Further, we earnestly wish (fifthly) that *Christ may be formed in your souls*, because **IT**

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WOULD BE ATTENDED WITH MANY PECULIAR ADVANTAGES TO YOURSELVES.—The work will be easier done now than in future years—a prodigious number of sins may, by this means, be prevented. You will find more warmth and pleasure in religion in younger years, than in any other period of life; you will, by this means, be able to make greater improvement in knowledge and piety; you will be able to do more service for God, and Christ, and your fellow creatures; if you live to gray hairs, *they will be a crown of glory to you, being found in the ways of righteousness.* And you will, by this means, be prepared for greater glory and happiness beyond the grave; *you will shine, not only as the stars, but as the sun in the kingdom of your heavenly Father.*

(Sixthly) MUCH OF THE COMFORT AND HAPPINESS OF YOUR PARENTS AND MINISTERS DEPEND ON THIS. It will rejoice their hearts to think that you will experience, with them, the pleasures of a religious life, and have before you the prospect of a happy immortality. They will converse with you with peculiar

peculiar pleasure, when they know that you are going with them to the same heavenly home. It will enliven their family and social worship, when they know that your hearts are engaged with them in these devout exercises. And when they have reason to believe you are retired to your closets, it will delight them to think (as an excellent writer expresses it), “ now is my child with his heavenly Father, he is conversing with his God, and preparing his soul for the business and blessedness of heaven ; now I hope God is smiling upon him, and teaching him, by his own happy experience, what I have so often told him, that *the ways of religion are pleasantness, and all its paths peace.*”— They will view you through life with pleasure, as bearing not only their own, but their Saviour’s image. When they are dying, it will comfort them to think you will fill their places in the world and church ; or if they should follow you to the grave, they will not mourn over you as they that have no hope ; but will rejoice to think you are safe landed on the shore of a happy immortality. Thus, living

living or dying, you will be the joy and comfort of your parents and ministers.

Once more (seventhly) WE DESIRE THIS THAT YOU MAY BEAR THE NAME OF CHRIST AND HIS CAUSE TO FUTURE GENERATIONS.—

The present race of holy men will soon go off the stage of life, and you are to succeed them; and what, will ye succeed them in their names, or business, or fortunes, and not succeed them in their religion, not imitate them in their zeal, their piety, devotion, and love? God forbid! *They have taught you the way of the Lord, and travailed in birth, again till Christ be formed in you;* and shall these generous labours, shall this god-like concern die with them? O my young friends, let it not be so.—Did Jesus become incarnate to teach you these things—did he die on the cross to establish the truth, and make atonement for sin, and procure your salvation—did so many confessors and martyrs seal that truth with their blood—did your ancestors so nobly and courageously defend it—did your ministers so earnestly and constantly instruct you in these things—and will you give up the cause, and let

let it die in your hands ?—Shall you be the persons in whom the entail of religion shall be cut off in your houses, and in the churches to which you belong ?—and who will do what lies in your power not only to murder your own souls, but to break the hearts of pious parents, frustrate the labours of ministers, and bring back the world to heathenish darkness ? Most merciful God forbid it !—Yet this may be the case, if *Christ is not formed in your souls*.—On the other hand, if he is formed there, you will stand up as witnesses for God in the world, you will maintain his cause, and *declare his righteousness to a generation that shall hereafter be born*. But if he is not formed there, we can expect none of these things ; religion will die with us, and we shall go down with sorrow to the grave.—These, my dear children, are some of the reasons, why we so earnestly wish that *Christ may be formed in your souls* :—and are they not enough to vindicate our concern, and to awaken YOUR'S ? Do not your hearts now glow with desire that *Christ may be formed in you* ?—O cherish that desire, spread it daily

before God in humble earnest prayer. — If *ye seek me early*, saith God, *ye shall find me*. Ye shall win Christ, and be found in him, and he shall be formed in your souls.—Then shall your own souls rejoice, and parents and ministers, and good men and angels, shall partake of your joy. Yea, God himself shall rejoice over you with joy, and *rest in his love*, and *joy over you with singing*; saying, *this my son was dead, but is alive again; was lost, but is found*. Amen.

## HYMN.

BLEST Jesus bow thine ear,  
While we entreat thy love;  
O come, and all our hearts possess,  
And our best passions move.

May we stand fast in Thee,  
Tho' storms and tempest beat;  
And in thy guardian arms obtain  
A calm and safe retreat.

Still be thy truth maintain'd,  
And still thy word obey'd;  
And, to the merits of thy blood,  
A constant homage paid.

So shall thy shepherds live,  
And raise their cheerful head;  
And, in such blessings on their flock,  
Confess their toils repaid.

ADDRESS

## ADDRESS VIII.

### A PRESENT ATTENTION TO RELIGION URGED UPON YOUTH, FROM A VIEW OF ITS FUTURE DIFFICULTIES.

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JEREMIAH xii. 5.

*If thou hast run with the footmen, and they  
have wearied thee, then how canst thou con-  
tend with horses?*

IN the former chapter we find that the men of Anathoth, a priest's city, had conspired to take away the prophet's life; this discouraged him, and made him unwilling to go on with his work. In the beginning of this chapter, he complains of the prosperity of the wicked, and the delay of God's judgments upon them. In the text, God reproves him for being discouraged by the few difficulties he had met with already, saying, *if thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee,*

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*then how canst thou contend with horses?—if thou canst not bear the opposition of thy townsmen and neighbours, how wilt thou bear to stand before the king, and the great men of Jerusalem, to be put into the dungeon, and otherwise ill treated?—Now the leading thought contained in these words, is this—that if a man cannot overcome lesser difficulties, and bear lesser inconveniences, he will be unlikely and unfit to bear and overcome greater.—There are but few that are so stupid and thoughtless, but are convinced of the importance and necessity of being religious, and resolve sometime or other to apply their minds to it; but the ruin of the greater part of mankind is deferring it.—Young persons are apt to put off the busines of religion till hereafter, from an apprehension that it is attended with great difficulty and self-denial, and will interrupt the pleasures they are fond of.—My busines therefore will be to shew you, that allowing religion has such difficulties, and requires such self-denial as you imagine, yet these difficulties are every day increasing, and the longer you defer it, the greater mortification*

tion and self-denial it will require to become religious. So that if persons will not be thoroughly religious while they are young, it is not to be expected that they will be so afterwards :—this is the doctrine I mean to insist upon now ; and let me put this doctrine in the form of familiar questions, to correspond with the language of the text ; and I hope, my young friends, you will put them close to your own hearts as in the sight of God.

(First), **IF YOU WILL NOT BE THOROUGHLY RELIGIOUS WHILE CONSCIENCE IS TENDER, HOW WILL YOU BECOME SO WHEN IT IS HARDENED ?**—In all mankind there is a general sense of the nature and difference of good and evil. In young persons who have enjoyed many opportunities of knowing God and their duty, there is a dread of sin, and they are not easily brought to endure it ; the mind is then soft and pliable, capable of receiving any admonitions, and easily melted : the conscience is then tender, it gives the youth a check when he neglects his duty, or approaches or hearkens to that which is evil ; and he can scarce help paying some grateful

acknowledgment to that Being who has given him life, breath, and all things.—But by neglecting to cultivate the mind, and acting agreeable to the dictates of conscience, he becomes less sensible of gratitude and duty, and feels less dread of that which is evil. By degrees he gets a habit of overbearing his conscience, despising its remonstrances, and trifling with sacred things. He feels less remorse when he has done evil, he becomes less capable of receiving good impressions, his conscience grows seared and callous, and he becomes hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; so that it is almost impossible to convince him of its malignity, to awaken his fears, or impress his heart with any serious concern about his salvation; and having so long shut his eyes and stopped his ears, it is next to impossible that he should be converted and healed.

(Secondly), IF YOU WILL NOT BE THOROUGHLY RELIGIOUS WHILE THE AFFECTIONS ARE WARM AND LIVELY, HOW WILL YOU BECOME SO WHEN THEY GROW WEAK AND DULL?—There is a warmth and strength of affection

affection peculiar to youth, which is capable of being improved to the noblest purposes of religion—while reason is the pilot that steers their course, the affections are the sails that move them forward. God has for wise purposes implanted in us the affections of love, and joy, hope, and fear; and where these are engaged on the side of religion, they greatly contribute to our progress and improvement in it. The affections grow weaker in the advance of life, and therefore religion cannot then be pursued with equal advantage. Where young minds receive and cherish religious impressions, and are in good earnest concerned about salvation, they proceed in the way with vigour and activity; they taste more pleasure in religious exercises, and this is an inducement to them to abound in them; their devotion is lively, their love fervent, their obedience cheerful, and their attainments will be great and eminent. But if they lose this precious season, and defer religion till their affections grow cool, they will have less inclination to pursue it, their advancement will

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be slow, and, consequently, their comforts will be fewer, and their hopes weaker.

Again (thirdly), **IF YOU WILL NOT BE THOROUGHLY RELIGIOUS BEFORE HABITS OF VICE ARE CONTRACTED, HOW WILL YOU BECOME SO WHEN THEY ARE GROWN STRONGER?** Frequently repeated acts produce a habit, and every one knows how difficult it is to correct and alter a bad habit.—If you have taken a wrong step or two, it is now, comparatively, easy to return to the paths of wisdom and righteousness; but the further you go on in the ways of sin, the more difficult you will find it to return—you will soon come to love sin, to excuse for it, to varnish it over: or if you wish to repent, it will be more difficult, because you will have more sins to review and lament—and the shame and confusion of doing it will make you averse to return; if you are disposed to it, your old habits will draw you back and baffle your best resolutions.—If you cannot conquer evil inclinations now, how will you conquer them when they have been cherished and indulged? If you cannot subdue irregular passions now, how will

will you do it when they become habitual, are all strengthened by gratification, and Satan has made your fetters strong? If you indulge an inordinate love of pleasure in youth, the love of it will still adhere to you; and though the object should be changed, the inclination will be stronger and self-denial more difficult.

Hear what the Prophet saith: *can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

(Fourthly), **I**F **Y**OU **W**ILL **N**OT **B**E **T**HO-  
**R**OUGHLY **R**ELIGIOUS **W**HILE **Y**OU **H**AVE **F**EW  
**O**R **N**O **B**AD **C**ONNECTIONS, **H**OW **W**ILL **Y**OU  
**B**ECOME **S**O **W**HEN **T**HEY **A**RE **M**ULTIPLIED  
**A**ND **S**TRENGTHENED?—The sociability of youth leads them to form acquaintances with those of their own age and standing, and they are influenced by the humour and vivacity of some sprightly youths to associate with them, than which nothing is more fatal to the interest of religion in their souls.—Now if you will not avoid such company, how will you retreat if you are linked in amongst them? If you cannot break off your acquaintance with one

one sinner, how will you free yourself from the entanglements of many? The shame of leaving your old acquaintances, and the fear of being reproached by them, will strengthen the chains in which you are held.—Acquaintance begets familiarity; and in the jollity of your friendship you may reveal, or they may discover, some secret in your conduct, which you will be afraid of having betrayed—perhaps some vices which you have been led into by them, and you will choose to continue the destructive commerce, rather than be publickly expos'd. Thus the difficulty of getting out of bad company, and breaking off bad acquaintance is continually increasing; yet, while you continue amongst them, there is no hope of your reformation: if any good impressions should be made on your minds, such acquaintances will endeavour to laugh you out of them, and tease you till you break each good resolution.—I pray you consider, if you will not keep out of the way of sin now, how will you return after you have *walked in the counsel of the ungodly?* And if you will not resolutely withdraw from the *counsel of the ungodly,*

*ungodly*, how will you *shun the seat of the scorner*, when you have taken up your place amongst them?

(Fifthly), IF YOU WILL NOT BE THOROUGHLY RELIGIOUS WHEN YOU HAVE FEW WORLDLY CARES, HOW WILL YOU BE SO WHEN THEY ARE GREATLY INCREASED?—Whatever gay prospects you may see before you, and how irksome so ever those restraints may be which your parents and masters lay upon you, you will find youth to be the easiest and the pleasantest part of life—that you have fewer cares and afflictions, than you will have in any future period—consequently you have more time to attend to the concerns of your souls and eternity. Hereafter you will have a thousand cares *about what you shall eat, and what you shall drink*, and how to provide for your family, which you are now strangers to; these cares will render you less fit, than you now are, for reading and hearing the word, and for prayer, and they will allow you less time for it.—Now if you will not be religious while you have more leisure and fewer cares, than perhaps you will ever have again, it can scarce

scarce be expected that you will be so here after.

Further (sixthly), IF YOU WILL NOT BE THOROUGHLY RELIGIOUS DURING THE STRENGTH AND VIGOUR OF YOUTH, HOW WILL YOU BECOME SO AMIDST DECAYS AND INFIRMITIES.—In youth, the health is generally good, the strength firm, the spirits lively, the active powers vigorous—youth is most suited to learning and improvement of any kind. In the advance of life the constitution and the senses are impaired—the understanding often weakened—the man becomes slow and inactive; or if he be diligent, he brings less to pass, than he could do in his youth.—You have now peculiar advantages for learning religion and becoming eminent for the practice of it; and therefore Solomon urges young persons to *remember their Creator in the days of their youth*, before the infirmities of age come on, when they will be unfit for it.—If you will not apply yourselves to reading and learning now, while the eyes are good and the memory retentive, how will you do it when the sight and the memory decays?

decay?—If you will not frequent the house of God now, while your limbs are strong and your senses active, how will you do it when the ears grow dull, and *the strong men bow themselves?*—If you will not now do good to others while you can go about it briskly, and talk to them with life and spirit, how will you do it when *the keepers of the house tremble*, when *the daughters of musick*, the organs of the voice, *are brought low*, and your own infirmities confine you at home, or engross all your cares?

(Seventhly), IF YOU WILL NOT BE THOROUGHLY RELIGIOUS IN THESE DAYS OF PEACE AND LIBERTY, HOW WILL YOU BE SO IN THE DAYS OF TROUBLE AND PERSECUTION?—Whatever peace and rest we now have, you, my young friends, may live to see very different times, such as our forefathers saw; you may live to see the saddest sight in the world—your liberty destroyed, and your bibles taken from you.—If you have no settled principles, if you are not well established in the fear and service of God while you are young, how is it likely that you should be-

come religious then?—If now you cannot resist temptations to offend God and wound your own consciences, though you suffer nothing by resistance, but the reproach of fools—how will you resist them when they come backed with the horrors of imprisonment, stripes, or death? You may then have no ministers to preach to you, no friends that dare counsel you, no solemn assembly to attend, no bible to consult for a word of comfort or promise. You have now every public advantage you can desire for knowing and doing the will of God; and if you will not improve them, there is no probability you should become religious under a thousand disadvantages and discouragements.

Once more (eighthly), **IF YOU WILL NOT BE THOROUGHLY RELIGIOUS WHILE GOD IS STRIVING WITH YOU BY HIS SPIRIT AND GRACE, HOW WILL YOU BECOME SO WHEN THEY ARE WITHHELD AND WITHDRAWN.**—God now addresses you not only by your consciences and by his word, but by his spirit, hinting to you the necessity of religion, and urging your attention to it. But there is such a thing as vexing,

vexing, and grieving, and quenching the spirit of God; this they do who will not attend to his motions, cherish good desires, and comply with his dictates.—*My spirit, says God, shall not always strive with man—* and without the assistance of God's grace and spirit we can do nothing successfully. The consequence of not improving the assistance of divine grace which you now enjoy, will be, that God will *depart from you*, suffer you to go on in sin, and give you up *to your own heart's lusts*; then *though you call he will not answer, and though you seek him earnestly, he will not be found of you.*

From what has been said, you SEE THE EGREGIOUS FOLLY OF THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE THAT NEGLECT RELIGION. They are, as I hinted above, convinced of its necessity, and, perhaps, determined some time or other to set about it in good earnest; but they imagine it is too difficult for them at present, that it is too grave and serious a concern for their time of life, and that they shall have better opportunities of attending to it hereafter: but every one of the questions we have been proposing

and considering, shews the folly and absurdity of this plea. All the difficulties they have now to encounter will be increased, and they never will have such favourable opportunities again.—If you spend your youth in thoughtlessness and sin, it is greatly to be feared your riper years will be spent no better; and if you live to be old, there will be nothing in your old age, but the childishness and folly of your youth, without its vivacities.—If reason and religion, that sun which God has lighted up in us, does not dispel the fogs and mists of vice before the noon of life, it is generally overcast for the whole day: and fact confirms this.—Very few in the advance of life are ever brought to be serious and holy; but suppose any of you should, by the extraordinary power of divine grace, be an exception to this remark; yet what we have been saying proves that you will not become eminent in religion—you will have less comfort in the work of God, and less glory hereafter. Awake then, my young friends, and yield yourselves to God; think with yourselves, when you are tempted to do evil, or to neglect

lect your duty, this temptation is but as a footman—if this wearies and conquers me, how shall I *contend with horses*, with future and greater temptations; whereas your overcoming the present temptations, will fit you to combat with future and greater trials:—as soldiers learn skill and courage by experience.

Farther, let serious and pious youths learn, from what has been said, HOW REASONABLE AND FIT IT IS THAT THEY SHOULD BE STEADY AND ACTIVE—solicitous to make daily progress in religion, and strengthen each other's hands in God, because they have greater advantages for both now, than they will ever have hereafter. You have now only *footmen* to *contend with*—put forth all your strength in watchfulness and prayer, and God will give you success.—You perceive that I have addressed you, my dear children, on a supposition that you may have many years before you, and shewed you upon that supposition, that now is the best time for serving God, and becoming established in religion; but I cannot conclude without reminding you, that this is but a supposition. Death

may come before you are aware, and break off all your wise thoughts and commendable purposes.—If you will not be thoroughly religious while young, you may never be: you may be like the hypocrites, of whom we read (*Job xxxvi. 14*), *they heap up riches, they die in youth, and their life is among the unclean*.—If you will not be religious while this precarious life continues, it is absolutely impossible you should be so afterwards; *there is neither knowledge, nor device, nor working in the grave*—to which you may soon be hurried.—I conclude with that exhortation in the Prophet Jeremiah, so well adapted to the circumstances of youth: (*Jer. xiii. 15, 16.*) *Hear ye, and give ear, be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause the darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.*

## HYMN.

YOUTH is the time to serve the Lord,  
The time t' ensure the great reward;  
This is the hour that God hath giv'n,  
To escape from hell, and fly to heav'n.

Then what my thoughts design to do,  
My hands with all your might pursue;  
Since no device, nor work is found,  
Nor faith, nor hope, beneath the ground.

There are no acts of pardon pass'd,  
In the cold grave to which we haste;  
But darkness, death, and long despair,  
Reign in eternal silence there.

## ADDRESS

## ADDRESS IX.

### A CAUTION AGAINST THE ENTICEMENTS OF SINNERS.

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#### PROVERBS i. 10.

*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*

HERE, my young friends, the wise man addresses you as a father; and warns you of four things—first, that you will meet with sinners—that they will endeavour to draw you into their ways—that they will use every insinuating method to compass their design—but, that you must by no means comply.

THAT YOU WILL MEET WITH SINNERS IN THE WORLD, AND AMONGST YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, IS A MELANCHOLY TRUTH.— Sin is a contagion that hath spread its mischievous influence through the old and the young, through all ranks and degrees of men upon

upon earth; it cleaves to the best of men. Could you have followed the Apostles and Prophets to their retirement, you would have heard them bewailing the remains of it within them.—But by sinners in the text, no doubt the wise man means those who were willingly and allowedly such—those who had no fear of God before their eyes, no principle of piety in their hearts: he saw with great concern that there were numbers of such in his days, and there have been numbers of such in every age—and this has ever been the grief of the pious and good.—The youth who knows not what it is to strive against sin, to watch and pray that he may not enter into temptation, and to have his heart purified by the gospel and spirit of Christ, is a **SINNER**, a dangerous acquaintance, an ensharing companion; however wealthy, or witty, or wise, he may be in other respects—however obliging in his carriage, polite in his behaviour, and free from notorious and open vices—still he is a **SINNER**, a person to be avoided, as one who is under the influence of a dangerous and a contagious disease, and who is in the broad road

road that leads to death.—Alas ! my young friends, such as these you will frequently meet with, both now and in every stage of your journey through life ; and we must, as your friends, warn you to be on your guard against them :

For Solomon plainly intimates, **THAT THEY WILL ENDEAVOUR TO DRAW YOU INTO THEIR CONVERSE, ACQUAINTANCE, AND GUILT.**—Company is what young persons are naturally fond of ; sinners cannot do without it, they have no happiness in being alone ; they will seek your company, perhaps to prey upon you, to be gay at your expence, to engage you in their sinful courses, that you may countenance them in their wickedness ; and if their criminal conduct should come to light, that they may throw the blame and the odium upon you as much as possible, and not bear it all themselves.—Think not that your **SERIOUSNESS** and **PIETY** will prevent the assaults of sinners ; they will think it a noble conquest if they can bring you over from both : to ensnare, to conquer you, is in some measure a conquest over religion itself, over the

the friends of religion, who are their opposers. It will greatly strengthen their party to have you amongst them, and is a temporary ease to, and vindication of, themselves. Apostates from religion are the favourites of the wicked; and they will do every thing they can to make your chains strong.—Think not you are set above the reach of danger, because you have the **BEST EXAMPLES** before you, and your religious advantages are many, and you have parents and friends instructing you, praying for, and watching over you;—there are in the world many affecting proofs that you are not.—The children of many pious, praying parents, who gave their friends and ministers room to hope well concerning them, have after all departed from God—so that their parents hearts have bled over them, and would rather have followed them weeping to the grave, than have seen them turning their back on him and his service, and *making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.*

Again, the wise man intimates, **THAT SINNERS WILL MAKE USE OF EVERY EN-SNARING METHOD TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR**

**DESIGN:—**

DESIGN.—Sinners (and Satan that first of sinners) will leave nothing untried, no stone unturned, that they may draw you into guilt, and work your ruin. There is something enticing in the mere circumstance of company: there is in the human breast a strong inclination to do what others do; and the apparent sinfulness of an action grows less as we see it repeated. The next thing to that of seeing another commit sin without pain, is the committing it yourself. It is a very hard thing to be serious in thoughtless company, and to be good in a wicked place. Besides this, gaiety, good temper, ease, the appearance of friendship, or fallies of wit or humour, these, and such like qualities, strongly impose on young persons, and lead them to overlook the evil conduct of those who possess such accomplishments.—As Satan sometimes puts on the form of an angel of light, so his servants sometimes put on the garb of virtue, and thus ensnare the incautious youth. If they have any face, or the least appearance of goodness, they will at first shew it you; *but the face of evil shall be hid behind a veil.*

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They will insinuate, THAT THERE IS NO HARM IN WHAT THEY WISH YOU TO DO, that it is a trifling matter, and God will not be angry with you for trifles—and that your youth will be a sufficient excuse for a few indiscreet levities. If they can prevail with you to think thus with yourselves, “ well, if this I have been doing is a sin, it “ is but a small one, it is such as can have “ no bad consequences—I shall not repeat it, “ at least very seldom, and I hope God will “ overlook it.”—When the unhappy, incautious youth—once promising, once the delight and joy of his parent’s heart, and his minister’s rising hope—when he has once been prevailed upon to act wrong, and excuse it in this way, a dreadful conquest is gained—he is gone—a thousand to one he never recovers: he will be hurried from step to step, from a less evil to a greater, till he can do that without remorse, which in time past he would have trembled to have thought of.

The hopes of PRIVACY AND CONCEALMENT is another insinuation of sinners.—“ It “ is done amongst friends—it can never be

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“ known.”

“ known.” But trust not, oh! trust not him who hath *not the fear of God before his eyes*.—He in whom you most confide, will probably be the first to betray you and laugh at your folly.—Besides, you can never conceal any crime from your conscience, and that will torment you; nor from God, and he will condemn you.

THEY WILL FURTHER INSINUATE THAT YOUTH IS NOT THE TIME FOR SERIOUSNESS AND PIETY, that you have many years before you, and that there will be time enough to repent and serve God hereafter. But are you sure that you shall live till you repent? or that you can repent if you should live? or that God will then accept you if you should wish to repent?—no such thing; it is a dangerous delusion, and designed to cheat you of your soul and eternal happiness. The only time you can be sure of is the present; no time is so well adapted for religion as youth, and there is no period in which God is so well pleased with it, or so much honoured by it.

Another artifice of sinners is that APPEARANCE OF EASE AND PLEASURE WHICH THEY

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PUT ON.—They would fain persuade you that their path is strewed with flowers, that the way to enjoyment and happiness is the very road that they have taken—that they are the most free, easy, and happy people in the world; but they will not tell you what conscience tells them, what guilty pangs they often feel, what doubts, surmises, suspicions rise in their breasts: they conceal the wound that is festering in their bosoms, and that worm, that living worm, which hath already begun to seize upon their vitals.—If they have ever trembled like Felix, when Paul *reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*; if they have ever been alarmed and terrified at the apprehension of sickness and death, they will not tell you of these things, but cautiously conceal them, with every other circumstance that might deter you from their sinful course.—But whatever profession of happiness they make who are habitually thoughtless and gay, and strangers to God, and Christ, and serious religion, my young friends, believe them not; God himself hath said, *the way of transgressors is hard*; and,

depend upon it, sooner or later, they will find it so.—Ignorance, prejudice, and vice, misrepresent the ways of Christ; and thousands of young persons have laid the foundation of their ruin, by believing the report. But the declaration of God, who can never deceive; the declaration of Jesus, whose heart is all grace and compassion; the experience of your pious parents, and all who have walked in the ways of God in every age, all unite to recommend devotedness to God through Jesus Christ, as the most eligible, the most honourable, the most safe, and happy way that you can take.—To forsake God and his service under pretence of seeking happiness, is like burning a house or a town to make the inhabitants comfortable; it is like leaving heaven, to seek happiness in the bottomless pit.

We have, finally, in our text THE WISE MAN'S ADMONITION TO HIS SON, NOT TO CONSENT:—*my son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not—do not consent, LET THE SIN BE WHAT IT WILL.*—Sins may be attended with different degrees of aggravation; but every sin is a great offence against God—and an awakened

awakened conscience will shew it to be so.— Before you take one step from the ways of God, remember that those who were the worst of men, begun with what is called trifling offences.—If you would not have your substance, your health, your soul be lost, yield to no sin. Beware of the first departure from Christ. *A backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.*

Further, *consent not, LET THE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO ENTICE YOU BE EVER SO GREAT.* Numbers will not quiet your conscience. Christ will be your judge; and the question is not, what do the multitude? but, what will he approve at last? What can numbers do against God, can they resist his judgments, deliver you from death, or save you from hell? No; but they will make hell more terrible, there you will meet the sinners that enticed you to sin; and the horrible interview and mutual dreadful reproaches will add new torments to those miserable abodes.—*O my son, if multitudes of sinners entice thee, consent thou not:*

For consider, THAT TO WHICH THEY ENTICE THEE IS A DREADFUL EVIL IN ITSELF—

it is rebellion against God your heavenly Father, your kind benefactor, against him who made you, clothes you, feeds you, and does you good continually. Sinners entice you to that which hurled Satan and his angels from heaven, which excluded our first parents from Paradise, which deluged the world, and brought affliction, disease, and death, on the whole human race.—Look at the cross, who is suffering, who is dying there? who cries out, behold all ye that pass by, was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow! *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, dying on that cross, to redeem us from sin, to atone for its guilt, and make way for mercy.—Behold here the exceeding greatness of that guilt to which sinners entice you.—You know the sentiments which the wisest and best men have formed of the evil of sin; their whole heart, and their whole life, is in opposition to it; against this they labour, and watch, and pray—and thousands have chosen to die rather than commit sin.—Follow their noble example; and say with that amiable, that heroic youth Joseph, *how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*

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*If sinners entice you, consent not, ON ACCOUNT OF THE DISTRESS IT WILL GIVE YOUR PARENTS AND FRIENDS, AND THOSE THAT LOVE YOU BEST.*—There is nothing that can pierce the heart of pious parents so deep, as the hardness and impiety of their children; what bitter lamentations have they uttered over such—and how many have been brought *with sorrow to the grave* on this account.—If when *sinners entice*, you *should consent*, think what an unkind return this will be for that constant care, that tender affection of your parents, which you can never fully repay. What—distress and grieve thy father, who thinks nothing he can do too much for thee! And wound thy mother's heart, who brought thee forth with so much anguish, who nourished thee in her bosom, whose anxiety for thee was more than she felt for herself, and whose constant concern was for thy good!—Ye sons and daughters, can ye bear to think of this?—If when *sinners entice*, you *should consent*, you will grieve every pious friend you have in the world—you will make the heart of your minister bleed with anguish, to think  
that

that his hope is disappointed, his labours lost, and your soul undone, after all his concern about it. You will grieve the holy spirit of God, and crucify your Saviour afresh, and thus fill heaven and earth with concern and grief at your folly.

Once more, *if sinners entice thee, consent thou not FOR THY OWN SAKE.* Every sinful compliance will give a wound to your own soul, which will be felt either in this world or another.—If you forsake the ways of wisdom, you will lose the friendship of the wise, they will soon shun you, they will cease to warn you, and at last, it may be, cease to pray for you.—You will deprive yourselves of the favour and blessing of God, of the friendship of Christ, of the influence of the spirit, of hope in the promises, and all inward peace and comfort.—In affliction, and at the approach of death, you will have nothing to support you—your wicked companions will forsake you—the recollection of your sins will stick close to you—the threatenings of God's word will terrify you—the fearful looking for of vengeance and fiery indignation to devour you, will overwhelm your soul.

soul.—We beseech you therefore, if you have any regard for yourselves, to your own peace and happiness here or hereafter, when *sinners entice you, do not consent.*

I will conclude, with giving you a few short directions to prevent your compliance. And first, *when sinners entice you, REMEMBER THE EYE OF GOD IS UPON YOU*—it is ever upon you at all times, in every place; he knows the things that come into your mind, every one of them. Keep this thought as much as possible in your mind, *thou God seest me.*—When you are enticed to sin, O that you would then think the eye of God is now upon me, he sees this temptation—he waits to see whether I will be faithful to him, or fall from him—he is ready to help me against it; and shall I then be a coward? shall I displease God, rather than resist the temptation? shall I yield, and give up all my hopes, and wound my Saviour, and lose my soul, and all this under the very eye of God? No; my gracious God, thine eye is upon me, I cannot, I dare not do it. Thus think of a present God,

God, and it will give you vigour and strength against the enticements of sinners.

Think further what GOD HATH DONE TO SAVE YOU FROM THE POWER AND DOMINION OF SIN.—He hath given you his word, and furnished it with promises and threatenings; he hath given you his Son, who died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; he hath promised you his spirit to help you in the conflict, and declares that you shall not be *tempted above what you are able to bear*; *but with every temptation there shall be a way to escape* from it, or to overcome it—and God is *faithful, and will certainly do so*. You would injure and dishonour your heavenly Father to suppose that he would leave you to contend with *an evil heart of unbelief, with the powers of darkness*, and all the enticements of sinners, without his divine assistance.—Fear not, my young friends, *the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath you are everlasting arms*.—Christ hath said, *my grace is sufficient for you*.—Suffer me therefore to address you as Paul addressed Timothy, *my son, be strong in the grace, that is, in Christ Jesus*; and through him

him *ye shall be conquerors, and more than conquerors.*

Consider the EXPECTATIONS YOU MAY JUSTLY FORM IF YOU RESIST THE ENTICEMENTS OF SINNERS.—The peace of conscience, the approbation of the wise and good, the honour, the improvement, the usefulness that will follow it here, and the favour of God, the applause of your Judge, and the crown of glory that will be the consequence for ever.—Every day then lift up your earnest prayer to God, that he would stand by and strengthen you, give you fortitude and courage in the trying hour, that you *may stand fast, quit yourselves like men, and be strong.* Go forth in his name, and he will *keep you as the apple of his eye;* he will be *your sun, and shield, your light, and defence.* He will give you grace, and glory, and no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly. Amen.

## HYMN.

LORD, thou hast search'd and seen me through ;

Thine eye commands with piercing view

My rising and my resting hours,

My heart, and flesh, and all their pow'rs.

My thoughts before they are my own,

Are to my God distinctly known ;

He knows the words I mean to speak,

Ere from my opening lips they break.

Within thy circling pow'r I stand ;

On ev'ry side I find thy hand :

Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,

I am surrounded still with God.

“ O may these thoughts possess my breast,

“ Where'er I rove, where'er I rest !

“ Nor let my weaker passions dare

“ Consent to sin, for God is there.”

DD RESS

## ADDRESS X.

## THE DANGER OF ENTERING ON A SINFUL COURSE.

PROVERBS iv. 14, 15, 16.

*Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men: avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.*

PERMIT me to address this advice of Solomon to you, my young friends, in whom I trust there is some good thing towards the God of your fathers, whose hearts are yet tender, and whose ears are open to counsel and instruction. Yet after all, I know you are in great danger of neglecting the lessons I am going to inculcate.—The warmth of your passions, the strong spring by which

O you

you are borne on to action, the gaiety and sprightliness of temper so natural to youth, your taste for pleasure, your inexperience of the wiles of the wicked one, and the deceits of sin, your open friendly disposition, and love for company and society, render such advice peculiarly necessary for you; yet at times I confess it leaves me under some painful apprehensions lest you should forget it, or not pay that regard to it which it demands. But I will hope better things of you—I speak to you with a serious concern for your happiness in time and eternity; and if you knew the feelings of my heart towards you, and the earnest longings I have for your salvation, I would hope your hearts are too generous not to wish to fulfil my joy, *and seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof.*—My text contains a serious admonition, which the wise man supports by his observation on the character and the misery of the wicked. These are the two parts of the subject—the general thought in the text is a caution to keep at a distance from every sinful way; but it is delivered in a variety of phrases

phrases, each of which contains an important suggestion—and there is a beautiful gradation in them, except in the two first, which I apprehend are transposed—let me illustrate them:

HE PERSUADES US IN GENERAL TO AVOID  
ADOPTING A SINFUL COURSE OF LIFE.—*Go not into the way of evil men*; do not take wicked men for your pattern: going or walking in a way, refers to a general conduct, an allowed and continual imitation; it does not mention any particular evil men, but all such in general.—There are various sorts of evil men; some are principally destitute of true piety, *they live without God in the world*, neither pray to him, nor praise him; they are not influenced by his authority, nor conformed to his laws, nor sanctify the sabbath—they live just as if there was no God, or he was nothing to them.—Some evil men add to this neglect of God, a profane contempt of him, set him at open defiance, and fill their mouths with oaths, curses, and blasphemies.—Some evil men add injustice to their impiety, defraud, and over-reach their neighbours, grind the faces of the poor, and

oppress those who are in their power.—Other evil men neglect the government of themselves, give way to unruly passions and appetites, become gluttons, drunkards, and slaves to every sensual lust.—Hypocrites are the worst of all evil men, who put on the form of religion as a cloak for their sin, who profess to know God, but in works deny him.—There are others who do not give such apparent reason for censure, yet are amongst evil men, having the form of religion, but without the power of it; they may be honest, friendly, compassionate, and in many ways agreeable companions, but they have neither the fear nor love of God in their hearts, nor any concern to please him. All these are evil men.—Now the wise man exhorts, *that you go not into any of their ways*, that you do not join yourselves to wicked men of any kind, in any circumstances, or on any consideration—though they are many, yet you must not follow the multitude in evil ways; though they are great and powerful, learned and polite, eloquent or engaging, whatever shining parts they may have, what-

ever

ever inducements they may offer, go not into their ways, as you value your life, your comfort, your soul—*come out from amongst them, and be ye separate.*

HE EXHORTS YOU FURTHER, NOT TO ENTER ON THIS COURSE.—*Enter not into the path of the wicked*, do not take one single step in it, do not venture on one evil act, not the least, not for a moment. And this, my young friends, is an admonition of the highest consequence. What is a guilty life, but a repetition of guilty actions.—*He*, saith the Apostle, *that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all*.—The authority of the lawgiver is struck at, and his power and justice defied and affronted by one sin as well as another; and the very same motive that engages you to commit one sin, is strong enough to engage you to commit another in like circumstances, and another still, till you can *drink in iniquity like water*.—Youth are tempted to some common and secret sin, without designing to repeat it: they take one step often with full purpose not to go on in sin; but by that step

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they are entered on the steep down-hill road, and it is ten to one that they never stop themselves. Curiosity, corrupt nature, the prospect of pleasure, the solicitations of companions, the wiles of Satan—none of these will be satisfied with a single indulgence, they will crave for more and more, till recovery becomes extremely difficult, if not utterly impossible; therefore the wise man joins these two exhortations together, with the utmost propriety, *if you would not go into the way of evil men, enter not into the path of the wicked*: if you would not live and die in these ways, do not take one step in them; if you allow yourselves to do so, you know neither human nature nor your own heart, if you think you can stop at pleasure.

HE BIDS YOU BE ON YOUR GUARD, THAT YOU ARE NOT LED INTO THEM UNAWARES—*avoid it, shun it*—this, you see, is an advance on the former thought. He before said, *go not into the way of evil men*; in order to this it will be of the greatest importance to gain a true and just sense of the evil of sinful ways, how much ingratitude there is in them, what

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an opposition to God, what an injury to yourselves, to your circumstances, character, and interest in this world, especially to your soul's immortal interest, which will be ruined by it for ever.—Think of the scandal and disgrace that every sin brings to your understanding, your reason, your conscience—and that the wages is death eternal.—Consider what sinful passions are most likely to get the better of you, where your principal danger lies, and what circumstances, company, and connections have injured and ruined others about you. Think what is *the sin that most easily besets* you, what you are most inclined to comply with—watch every weakness of the soul, and put a double guard there where you see your danger. Make no connections, engage in no company, in no party of business or pleasure, without considering the consequences. *O that you were wise, that you understood the importance of this admonition, and would consider the latter end,* what it is likely to be, and what it may come to.

The wise man still advances on the former caution, and exhorts you not only to avoid every

every evil way in general, BUT TO BE ON YOUR GUARD AGAINST THE APPROACH TO ANY SINFUL WAY—PASS NOT BY IT, *come not near* the path that leads to *it*, do not go so near as you lawfully can. Only *the appearance of evil*, if you go near it, may strike your mind, may enter your hearts, it may raise a wish, a desire in your breasts; *and when lust is thus conceived, it brings forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death*: avoid, therefore, *the appearance of evil*.—Great indeed is the folly and danger of that young mind, that dares to be a willing spectator of sinful actions; or a willing hearer of sinful discourse—the moment you can patiently attend to these things, your soul begins to suck in the poison, and dreadful may be the issue. Be not therefore acquainted with evil men, do not throw yourselves into their company; rather decline some advantages and deny yourselves, than hazard the peace and safety of your minds.—Do you know the person, and where he lives, who has been tempting you to neglect your busines, to mispend your sabbaths, to think little of your

bible,

bible, to jest at serious men and holy things? Do you know the person, and where he lives, who would lead you to vain amusements, to public houses, to drink with the drunkard, and talk with the profane—avoid him as you would the face of a serpent, pass not by his door, hide yourself from him, lest you be taken in the snare, and ruined for ever.

Hence the wise man advances on all these particulars, and exhorts you TO RETIRE, AS FAR AS POSSIBLE, FROM A SINFUL WAY—*turn from it, pass away*—turn into other paths in which wise men have been seen to walk, into the paths of righteousness, the ways of holiness and peace—do it immediately, *pass away*, flee as for your lives—safety is before you, death and misery behind you.—Remember that to abstain from evil ways is not all that is required of us.—Many think a negative religion, an harmless conduct, is enough; supposing you have attained to this, that you are arrived at a state in which you do nobody any harm: in that case you would have as much religion as a stone or a log of wood—they do no harm—is this all God requires of you—

you—to do no harm is at best an useless character; but the religion of Christ requires that you be filled with a divine temper and disposition, with love to God and man.—Hence you must see that it is not only necessary to be separate from sin and sinners; but to become different sort of persons, new and holy creatures, conformed to the image and gospel of Christ, and devoted to his service.—We, who are your friends, and teachers, and ministers, cannot be content in seeing you no better than mere stocks or stones. We wish, and pray, and *even travail in birth till Christ be formed in your soul*, till you are filled with his amiable and holy temper, and are made meet for the society of saints and angels in heaven.—This is the substance of the wise man's advice, he persuades in general against adopting a sinful course; he exhorts you not to enter on it, but to avoid it, that is, watch that you are not led into it unawares; he begs you not to come near the place of danger, pass not that way, go not by it, nay, you must *turn from it, pass away in haste, get into another and better road.* And the reason why

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he gives you this advice, and so earnestly presses it upon you, is, that they are miserable ways—and the danger there is of your adopting them; *for they sleep not*, says he, *except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall.*

Observe here, HE GIVES A MOST HORRID ACCOUNT OF SINNERS; this is a most dreadful image of wickedness rising to an amazing height: he describes such as making a trade of it—it is their daily business—what they could not sleep without having done—as what they take pleasure in—it is their meat and drink to do evil—they are never better pleased than when employed in this work, in the most grievous and shocking instances of it. Nay, farther, he represents them as ready to deny themselves common repose to accomplish their end; *they could not sleep*, would not lie down on their beds, or if they did, their sleep was taken from them, they are restless and miserable if they do not mischief, and *cause some to fall*: their whole heart was set upon corrupting others, their whole life devoted to it.—Observe the progress of vice, it begins

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in listening to temptations, then looking on sin without horror, then it becomes familiar, then pleasant, and then necessary ; they cannot sleep without it, they are miserable till it comes forth into action. So I remember Colonel Gardener said, “ that he was often “ pressed as a cart loaded with sheaves, till “ his wickedness burst from him ; and he has “ often withdrawn from company, who were “ any restraint upon him, to another room, “ that he might open his mouth in curses, “ and pour out vollies of oaths and blas- “ phemies, without restraint.” — What an amazing height of wickedness—but you will say these are abandoned sinners : and what is this argument to the purpose ? It is this much to the purpose, that the wise man goes on this supposition :

THAT THE LEAST INCLINATION TO SIN,  
OR CARELESSNESS OF CONDUCT, MAY LEAD TO  
THOSE VICES, MONSTROUS AS THEY ARE—  
may lead you to such courses as you are not  
now aware of, such as your soul would  
shudder this moment to think of, as would  
make you cry out, as one once did when he  
was

was warned of the consequence of his present evil way: " am I a dog that I should do such things as these."—From the first step in sin to the depth of iniquity, the descent is always easy, and sometimes sudden. I have known one hour's indulgence lead a youth to such things as have injured him through all his future life, in his substance, business, and reputation—some to such connections as have ruined their constitution; and others to such passions and outrages, that they have abused their best friends, and cursed their parents to their face—none of which things they designed, nor would have thought they could have been guilty of, a few hours before. It is, however, in general by degrees that persons are led on to the greatest crimes. We have seen commendable industry rising up to a desire of gain, and from thence to covetousness, from whence proceeds at first little and mean actions, then unjust and unlawful methods of gain—from whence come theft, highway robberies, murder, and the highest crimes—and thus it is with all kinds of sin.—It often happens such persons are under serious impressions and convictions; and that the anguish

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of their souls in such seasons of reflection are so great, that they cannot find any enjoyment, they can neither eat, nor sleep, nor diveit their melancholy; yet when the next temptation comes, the next wicked companion invites, they cannot resist, but plunge again into the same excess of riot, till at last they are hardened in their iniquity, despise reproof, and are given up of God, and have nothing before them but a *fearful looking for of judgment*.—The wise man knew that the least indulgence in sin, may lead you into all this misery; and therefore he gives this exhortation in the text: and let me urge it upon you, my young friends, with all the tenderness and affection of a minister of Christ, with all the feelings of a tender father and friend, that you enter not into the path of the wicked, nor go in the way of evil men; that you avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and flee away: and for this awful reason, amongst many others, because they sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall. Be therefore on your guard; watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. If you unexpectedly are cast into the

the way or company of evil men, *turn from it, pass away*; if you cannot do it instantly, do it as soon as possible, trust not yourselves—your good resolutions may fail you, your own heart may deceive you—be sensible of your danger, set a double guard on your actions, your words, your thoughts at that time: and above all lift up your heart in silent earnest prayer to God, saying, *Lord, stand by me and strengthen me; keep back thy servant from presumptuous sin, take not thy holy spirit from me, but with this temptation make a way for my escape.*—If any of you have been ensnared by evil men and evil company, let me beseech you before it be too late, to forsake the evil way and live. *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* For your encouragement God hath said, *let the sinner forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.* Fear not to make the bold and noble attempt. *Turn ye at my reproof, saith the Lord. Behold I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.*—And Christ hath said, *my grace shall be sufficient for you, and my strength*

*Strength shall be perfected in your weakness.*  
 This is my message to you, my young friends, what effect it will have, I know not; but this I know, I have faithfully warned you, I have affectionately exhorted you to be wise, and holy, and happy: and my heart's desire, and prayer to God for every one of you, is, *that you may be saved.* And now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and dominion both now and for ever.

Amen.

*H Y M N.*

THE youth is ever blest  
 Who shuns the sinner's ways,  
 Amongst their councils never stands,  
 Nor takes the scorner's place;  
 But makes the law of God  
 His study and delight,  
 Amidst the labours of the day,  
 And watches of the night.  
 He, like a tree, shall thrive,  
 With waters near the root;  
 Fresh as the leaf his name shall live—  
 His works are heav'nly fruit.  
 God knows, and well approves,  
 The way the righteous go;  
 But sinners and their works shall meet  
 A dreadful overthrow.

*ADDRESS*

## ADDRESS XI.

### ON THE CHOICE OF COMPANY.

PROVERBS xiii. 20.

*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.*

THROUGH all the book of Proverbs, by wisdom we are to understand religion; and by folly, irreligion and wickedness.—In like manner, by wise men in the text, we are to understand, not only persons of learning and good sense, but such also as are exemplary for virtue, seriousness, and piety; and by fools, we are to understand, not so much persons of weak intellects, as those who are chargeable with that most egregious folly of being wicked and impious: and the expression is very proper—for religion and virtue are the highest wisdom, and sin is the most hurtful

and infamous folly in the world.—The truth that Solomon would impress upon the heart of his son in the text is this, that the youth who keepeth company, and makes friendship with persons of wisdom, probity, and religion, will improve himself by their company, and in due time grow wise, and good, and happy; but he that is the stated companion of wicked and impious persons, will, in all probability, bring himself into misery and ruin. This is the lesson that Solomon reads to his son, and it is worthy of his wisdom, and suitable to the character of a prudent and anxious parent. It is a lesson I would read to you with a parent's heart, and the tenderest concern for your honour and usefulness in life, and your happiness for ever. Some of you may soon be called to enter upon life, to choose and act for yourselves, to be in some measure masters of your own ways and actions; now is the time in which to shew your wisdom and discretion in the company you choose, and the ways you take.

And here let me intreat you to consider that **YOUR CHARACTER AND REPUTATION IN**

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THE WORLD WILL MUCH DEPEND ON THE CHOICE YOU MAKE OF COMPANIONS AND FRIENDS.—It is a very unhappy thing for young persons to be careless on this head, and to shew a haughty indifference to what the world thinks of them; especially to undervalue the esteem of good men, of their friends, and parents.—*A good name is better than great riches*; and the esteem of wise and worthy men is a great blessing: every wise man labours to secure this—every modest youth trembles at the thought of losing it. Now this will in a great measure depend upon the character of those with whom you associate, whom you make your chosen companions, and style your friends. If for this purpose you are seen to solicit the acquaintance of persons of reputation, of discretion, of good sense, cheerful seriousness, and amiable dispositions; if you are observed to associate principally with such, and to be respected by them, this will give the world about you a good opinion of your wisdom and understanding—it will raise the most pleasing expectations from you in all your friends—it will engage

engage other virtuous and well disposed young persons to seek your acquaintance, and give joy and gladness to your parent's heart. But if on the contrary you choose the gay, the idle, the wicked for your companions; if you are observed to attach yourselves to young persons of loose principles and relaxed conversation, this will sink your reputation every where; and while your friends observe it with sorrow, and your parents with painful anxiety, all persons of wisdom and reputation will think meanly of you, and you will lose the esteem and confidence of all the world.—It is a common proverb of the ancients, “ tell me “ with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee “ what thou doest.—It is a common saying with us, that you may know a person by his companions, that a man shews his own disposition and understanding, by the choice of his friends; there is a considerable foundation in fact to build this observation upon; and be assured, my young friends, the world does very much judge by this rule. And it is no little evil to sink in reputation with the wife

wife and worthy part of mankind, to lose the esteem of our friends and relations, to forfeit the good opinion of those around us, and to be shunned by virtuous youths, as unprofitable and dangerous companions. It will wound your own minds, hurt your worldly interest; and when your reputation is once lost, you will find it hard to regain it, hard to be admitted afterwards into the society of the virtuous and discreet. Bad companions leave a blot upon a person's character, that is not soon nor easily washed out.

Again, UPON THE CHOICE OF YOUR COMPANIONS WILL GREATLY DEPEND YOUR IMPROVEMENT IN KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING:—For *be that walketh with wise men shall be wise.* Young persons of good sense, amiable dispositions, and industry, are useful examples to each other; they naturally inspire one another with emulation, and each of them strives to excel: their mutual converse will not only convey knowledge in the most pleasing way, but will fix it deeper and firmer in each other's mind. A person

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who walks with such companions will be ashamed of ignorance and laziness; he must necessarily either desert his friends, or improve his understanding. But on the other hand, the ignorant, the idle, the inconsiderate, the lovers of pleasure and vanity, let their understandings lie as a barren waste; they support one another in folly and ignorance—he that associates with them, will find them a bar to his mental improvement; they will waste his time, and give his mind a trifling, dissipated turn, that it will fix on nothing, and improve in nothing.—It is good for young persons to constrain themselves to the pursuit of knowledge, by selecting worthy companions; they will find increasing knowledge a continual entertainment to them, they will hereby have the most pleasant and useful employment for their leisure hours, and not be afraid of a solitary evening. By this means they will lay up a stock of knowledge that will be useful to them in future life, that will not only render them agreeable companions every where, but qualify them for every duty and station to which they may be called.—Youth is the time

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I for this acquirement; but a trifling youth is laying up in store a larger matter for bitter repentance.

I observe further, THE CHOICE YOUNG PERSONS MAKE OF THEIR FIRST FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCE, WILL HAVE A GREAT INFLUENCE ON THEIR FUTURE WELFARE AND COMFORT IN LIFE.—These first connections commonly lead on to more lasting and important ones, they give a turn to his mind, and almost necessarily involve him in that way of life which he is likely to pursue ever afterwards. In this sense Solomon tells us, that *a companion of fools shall be destroyed.* All the ways of sin commonly lead to sickness and poverty, they plunge men in sorrow and calamities of many sorts; you may look around you and see this verified every day. The natural end of a prodigal son or daughter (if not reformed) is shame and misery to themselves, and grief and sorrow to their friends; and he that walketh with such, must expect their lot: he will gradually be led into their follies and vices, he will get more and more connected with them; he will be at length involved in their

their misery, in their disgrace, and ruin.—I could bring many instances, my young friends, to prove this; I could tell you of many well-instructed and well disposed young persons, who have been thus seduced by evil companions; I could tell you of the children of many of the most pious and worthy families, and even ministers too, who by making a wrong choice of their first companions, have brought ruin upon themselves, and heaped sorrow upon the best of parents. On the other hand, where the first companions and friends are prudent, humble, diligent, and pious, it leads on to every agreeable future connection—such persons will stand by each other through life: we can none of us stand single—every man wants friendship and assistance from his fellow creatures—good companions will be firm and useful friends—bad ones will forsake you, betray you, and disgrace and ruin both you and themselves.

Once more, THEIR RELIGIOUS CHARACTER AND EVERLASTING HAPPINESS WILL BE MUCH INFLUENCED BY THE COMPANY AND FRIENDSHIP WHICH YOUNG PERSONS FORM IN LIFE.

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In every step of life we should always remember this plain and important truth, that we are immortal creatures, that we are upon a state of trial for eternity, and that nothing is so essential to our happiness as the favour of God, that our highest concern is to seek and secure it; and in order to this, the duties of religion, the improvement of our minds in knowledge, in holiness, and all the graces of the Christian temper, is to be the great business of our lives: that we are frail and fallen creatures, and very prone to be led away from God and duty, as well as to be remiss in those great concerns; on these accounts it is of great use for young persons to have not only sober and prudent friends and companions, but they should also be virtuous and religious ones—they should be such as will encourage and animate them in the great duties of religion, by their pious example—such as will watch over them with tenderness and love—such as will instruct them in religious knowledge, by their conversation—such as shew the beauties of holiness by a blameless life—such as shew the excellence and happiness of religion,

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by cultivating the graces of it in their temper, and exercising them in their lives. Happy is the parent who sees a son or daughter surrounded with such friends and companions as these. Happy is the amiable youth whose early choice fixes upon such as these; in such company the work of religion will go on pleasantly, and the difficulties of it be undergone with vigour and resolution: when a pious youth enters life in such connections, there is a prospect of a steady, uniform, and persevering life of piety; but on the other hand, nothing is more ruinous to the soul, and all the interest of religion and eternity, than vain, sinful, and irreligious company—the companions of such fools will be destroyed in their best interests, in their souls, and their everlasting concerns. Evil company hardens the heart, fears the conscience, makes the mind vain and trifling, it prevents good impressions being made on the heart, it chokes every virtue and grace in its first bud, and it has a most sad tendency to lead astray even those that have been used to walk in the ways of piety and virtue.—*Make no friendship, says Solomon, with an angry man;*

*man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.* And the caution will hold good in regard to every kind of snare; to keep close to God in prayer, and to keep far from evil company, is absolutely necessary, in order to secure our virtue, our piety, and the everlasting welfare of our souls.

If any of you should ask **WHO ARE THESE FOOLISH AND DANGEROUS COMPANIONS THAT WE MUST AVOID:** I answer, the drunken, the profane, the debauched, the immoral, and persons of bad repute; however blithe, and gay, and kind, and cheerful, and entertaining such companions are, they are still very bad ones; yea the idle also, the lovers of pleasure, the passionate, the vain, and imprudent—these also are bad companions; he is a bad companion who is not a good one, and he cannot be a good one who is not virtuous and religious.

DO **But you may ask WHERE ARE GOOD COMPANIONS TO BE FOUND:**—do not we often hear old and grave people complain for want of such, as the proper friends and intimates of sober and pious youths? I answer, if none such should fall in your way, I would

advise you to associate with cheerful people, though older than yourselves; I am sure they would readily admit you into their company, and you may be happy with them. But after all, religious and virtuous youths may be found by those who seek after them, and will deserve them; those mostly complain for want of them, who are unworthy of them, who are peevish, or reserved, or haughty, or apt to complain. He that will have good friends, must shew himself friendly—a good temper, a sober carriage, meekness of spirit, humility, cheerfulness of mind, and an enlarged heart, will naturally draw wise and good friends to you in every place: many want such companions, who do not discover it, because they know not where to find such.

BUT AM I TO BE RUDE IF PERSONS OF BAD CHARACTER NECESSARILY COME IN MY WAY—by no means; be always civil, my young friends—carry ease and sociableness with you wherever you go—the world has a right to this carriage: but remember there may be abundance of civility, and every article of good manners, where there is no friendship, no intimacy at all. If you would avoid evil

evil company, let me entreat you not to be hasty in choosing your friendships and acquaintance. As soon as you enter on the world, and seem fit for acquaintance, the idle, the thoughtless, and the wicked will immediately run to you, embrace you, love and court you at first sight; there is an eagerness in such to ensnare and captivate you, in order to keep themselves in countenance: but wiser persons, and youths of better character, will keep off in common civilities at first, they will know you before they embrace you; but when they do embrace you, they will do it with all their hearts. Do not rush hastily then into friendships and intimacies, but take time to choose with prudence and wisdom. In the choice of companions a parent's advice will be of great use, and ought to be regarded; a wise parent will not peremptorily choose his child's friends, he will not absolutely prescribe to him on this delicate head: true friendship must be a personal choice; but a parent ought to be consulted, and has a right to put a negative, and say with whom you shall not be intimate. In regard to every choice, every connection which you may form now or in

future life, one rule is universal—a bad man cannot be a good companion, a safe friend, a good husband, or a good father.—To conclude, the very best advice I can give you is, that you make God your counsellor in every thing, that you pray daily to him, take direction from his word, follow the leadings of his providence, and act in every thing as those who prefer religion and the favour of God above every thing else; thus acknowledge God in all your ways, and he will direct your paths. Amen.

## HYMN.

PRESERVE me, Lord, in time of need,

For succour to thy throne I flee;

But have no merits there to plead—

My goodness cannot reach to thee.

Oft have my heart and tongue confess

How empty and how poor I am:

My praise can never make thee blest,

Nor add new glories to thy name.

Yet, Lord, thy saints on earth may reap

Some profit by the good we do;

These are the company I keep,

These are the choicest friends I know.

Let others choose the sons of mirth,

To give a relish to their wine;

I love the man of heavenly birth,

Whose thoughts and language are divine.

## ADDRESS

## ADDRESS XII.

### THE SAD REMEMBRANCE OF YOUTHFUL SINS.

#### PSALM XXV. 7.

*Remember not the sins of my youth.*

IN this psalm David is taking a serious review of his past life; when the sins of his youth came into his remembrance, appeared in aggravated circumstances, and greatly affected his pious mind, this was the occasion of that earnest prayer in the text: *Remember not the sins of my youth.* We know not to what particular sins David might refer, but we have no reason to conclude that they were of a notorious kind; he was religious when young, and therefore we may suppose that they were only such sins as young persons in common are inclined to, and are more especially addicted to in the early part of life: whatever these sins were, he thought of them with

with shame and humiliation; and earnestly implored divine forgiveness. *Remember not,* saith he, that is, do not call me to account, do not punish me for the sins of my youth: on these words I think we may naturally ground this proposition, THAT THE REMEMBRANCE OF YOUTHFUL SINS WILL SO AFFECT GOOD MEN IN THEIR RIPER YEARS, AS TO FURNISH MATTER FOR DEEP HUMILIATION AND EARNEST PRAYER.—Let me point out to you some of those sins to which young persons are particularly exposed, and which they will afterwards remember with shame and sorrow. And here give me leave to mention UNCHASTITY IN THOUGHTS, WORDS, AND ACTIONS, as what is too often the sin of youth: of impure actions there are various kinds, some more gross and flagrant, and others which are often looked upon with more allowance in youth; but I need not enter into particulars, they will readily occur to the mind of those who are conscious of guilt. Solomon had such persons in view, when he said, (*Prov. vii. 7.*) *I looked among the youths, and beheld among the simple ones, a young*

*young man void of understanding*: such are all they who indulge them *void of understanding*; every degree of them, and every approach to them, debases and pollutes the mind, is contrary to God's holy law, and is altogether hateful to him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and in whose sight no sin is small.—Young persons are in danger (especially when in company with those of their own age) of contracting guilt **BY IMPURE AND INDECENT WORDS**; however harmless some people may esteem a loose, filthy kind of conversation, the word of God most plainly and solemnly condemns it: *as for all uncleanness*, says the Apostle (*Ephes. v. 3, 4.*), *let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting.* Neither are **IMPURE THOUGHTS** more allowed by the word of God, than impure words or actions; these may be frequently and involuntarily suggested to the mind, and this mere suggestion, when directly opposed, is no sin; but when they are indulged, when they are thought of over and over again, and rolled like a sweet morsel *under the tongue*, they

they pollute the soul as really, and are as displeasing in the eyes of that God who searches the heart, as if they were brought forth into action: he sees the inclination to evil, and where that is indulged and cherished, it is not the fear of God, but the want of opportunity, or some other selfish motive that prevents the evil being performed. He has expressly declared *that the thought of foolishness is sin*; and our Lord (in *Matt. v. 28.*) has pronounced him as really guilty before God, *who does but look on any forbidden object to desire it*, as if he had gratified his desire.

The next youthful sin I shall mention, is **PRIDE AND SELF-CONCEIT**; there is no disposition more contrary to the nature and will of God, it ruined our first parents, and millions of their offspring: it is more especially apparent in young people, and discovers itself in a variety of ways—some value themselves highly on being born of more wealthy parents than others, and look with contempt on the poor, who perhaps in many respects are much their superiors—others value themselves greatly on that deceitful thing called beauty, which perhaps after

after all exists only in their own proud conceit of themselves, or at best is only a gift of nature, and fading as the flower of the field —this disposition almost universally appears among young people in an undue fondness for the ornaments of dress and clothing, and in a very unbecoming concern to shew their finery, for which after all they are indebted to beasts or insects, the true original owners. But perhaps in no instances do young persons discover greater or more foolish pride than in their high opinion of their mental endowments, in their skill and abilities, which they cannot bear to have called in question; in their understanding and knowledge, which makes them averse to be instructed; in disregarding, and sometimes almost despising, the counsel of their wiser friends; in their fondness for their own way, and in their aversion to any control or restraint. To see a young person, says one, who has but just, as it were, opened his eyes on the world, who knows very little, and has had no experience; to see such a creature proud, and conceited, and self-willed, and contradict, and censure others, as if he knew all,

all, and was the only wise man upon earth—what can be more hateful or preposterous; but it is not only so in the eyes of man, but of God, *he knows the proud afar off—he resisteth the proud; but giveth grace unto the humble: the meek he will guide in judgment, the meek he will teach his way.*

Next to this, and which indeed is generally the consequence of it, is DISOBEDIENCE TO PARENTS; this is another sin with which young people are chargeable, and which they will remember with sorrow another day. The authority of parents over their children is very strongly expressed in scripture, and a disregard to it is represented as a very great sin. *Honour thy father and thy mother* was not only one of the ten commandments given to the Jews, but is frequently repeated in the New Testament with a peculiar emphasis, and is mentioned as *the first commandment with promise*. Disobedience to parents is mentioned by the Apostle in a very black catalogue of vices, which he foretold would prevail in perilous times.—It is said, (Deut. xxvii. 16.) *Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his*

*bis mother.* And *Prov. xxx. 17.* is a very awful passage to this purpose, *the eye that mocketh at his Father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.* But, alas ! how apt are young persons to forget such passages as these; and through their pride and obstinacy, to disregard the authority of their parents, in doing which they despise the authority of God, and run into those sins from which their parents care would have restrained them. In some instances this has brought their parents *gray hairs with sorrow to the grave;* and in many others has given them such uneasiness, as hath furnished disobedient children with abundant matter for painful reflections and bitter repentance, when their parents were laid in the dust.—Allow me to add further, that young people are prone to

**INDULGE THEMSELVES IN EXCESSIVE MIRTH AND UNDUE GAIETY OF TEMPER.**—It is a common plea that religion was never designed to make persons melancholy, and that many passages in scripture allow cheerfulness to youth ; this is very just—God forbid you

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should think otherwise—be cheerful, and lively, and happy: *rejoice O young man in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth;* but still regulate your pleasures, both as to their kind and degree, as those who know *that God will bring you into judgment.* No pleasure is lawful that is not innocent, no mirth allowable that will not bear the test of that day. Alas! how will they answer for it on that day, the greatest part of whose time is spent in amusements and diversions, as they are called; whose only delight is to be with gay company and merry people; and who waste that money and those hours in fashionable or foolish sports, which ought to be employed in learning, or business, in reading their bible, and praying to God. When your amusements are expensive beyond what you can afford, or break in on the time which you otherwise ought to have employed in business, or religious exercises, or learning, and especially if they unfit you for devotion, and make you indisposed to it, they are undoubtedly sinful, and you will remember them with sorrow another day.—Under this head I might mention

mention a **VAIN, TRIFLING, CHILDISH DISPOSITION**, which young people are prone to indulge, and which leads them to say and do such things as cannot properly be called vices, but which answer no good end, and are hardly worthy the name of diversions; and which at best only serve to raise a laugh among their companions: such a temper occasions a great dissipation of thought, and wastes a deal of time which might be employed in some more useful and manly recreations; it answers no good end, it often makes a person look ridiculous, it is frequently followed with mischievous consequences—*and for all these things God will bring you into judgment.* No doubt there is such a thing as innocent mirth and laudable cheerfulness; it is easy to conceive how this may become an ornament to true religion, and improve its influence on the mind; but, alas! young people through the thoughtlessness and levity of their temper, run into the other extreme; they pursue their trifling amusements with so much eagerness, that they lose every serious impression, if they ever had any, and bring their minds into

such a giddy, trifling frame, as prevents serious impressions from being made there.—Solomon says of *laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?* What profit is there in it, what pleasure in the reflection; alas! *what doth it?* Does it not often drive serious thoughts from the mind? Does it not lead those who indulge it, to put off religion, and forget death and judgment, which however come on with equal speed, whether thought of or not? Old age, or the cares of life, or an early death come on them before they are aware; it finds them unprepared, the great work of life undone—and the consequence is deplorable beyond expression. If this should not be the case, if through divine mercy you should hereafter be brought to *consider your ways, and be wise*, yet depend upon it, my young friends, you will then eat the bitter fruit of such foolish doings; you will, like Job, *possess the iniquities of your youth*; and at one time or other, in judgment or in mercy, *be filled with your own ways*: you will then say (as in *Jer. xxxi. 19*) *surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh*:

*thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.—*

WHILE YOUNG YOU ARE RECEIVING DISTINGUISHING AND PECULIAR MARKS OF THE DIVINE CARE AND BOUNTY: and shall this be the season for sinning against God? In the time of youth you may do most for God; there is a warmth of affection, great leisure, and every thing to invite you to duty and happiness; if this, therefore, has been a time of dissipation, folly, and various sins, what sad reflections will it occasion—your hearts will be filled with shame, and grief, and surprise, while you look back on them. And you will frequently *bow before the throne of mercy*, with the Psalmist's petition: “*Lord, remember not the sins of my youth; they are so many and great, that I cannot help remembering them, nor can I do it without shame and confusion. I am amazed at thy long suffering, O God, that I was not cut off with this and the other companion in sin, and called with all my guilt on my head, to thy judgment seat: it is of thy mercy, that I am not utterly consumed, because*

“ thy compassion faileth not. Alas ! what  
“ impurity has there been in many of my  
“ thoughts, words, and actions ; what pride,  
“ what self-conceit has lodged in this poor  
“ ignorant heart of mine. *I thought myself*  
“ *something when I was nothing* : this pride  
“ and ignorance have led me to a thousand  
“ instances of disobedience to parents and  
“ teachers ; in many instances I have set light  
“ by my father and mother, and brought  
“ myself hereby under the curse of Almighty  
“ God, and filled their hearts with sorrow  
“ and pain.—Alas ! how often have I in-  
“ dulged in excessive mirth and undue gaiety,  
“ till I have exposed my own folly and  
“ weakness, banished every serious thought,  
“ broke through the rules of decorum, and  
“ even decency ; and made others as vain,  
“ and foolish, and trifling as myself : my  
“ childhood and youth have been vanity ; in  
“ consequence of all this I forgot God,  
“ neglected, and sometimes even made a jest  
“ of religion, laughed at serious godliness,  
“ and made *a mock at sin*. Fool that I was—  
“ what time have I lost, what evil have I  
“ done,

“ done, what guilt have I contracted? *I*  
“ *have gone astray from the womb: O Lord,*  
“ *thou knowest my foolishness from my youth up;*  
“ and if thou hadst dealt with me as mine  
“ iniquities deserve, I should now have had  
“ my lot with those young sinners who *are*  
“ *lifting up their eyes in torments,* many of  
“ whom were my companions in folly; and  
“ I might have been this day their companion  
“ in misery.”—Thus youthful sins will be  
recollected, and lamented, and mourned  
over, by those who in after life become  
thoughtful and sincere christians.—But  
what if youthful sins should lead you on to a  
*wicked life,* which it is a thousand to one but  
they will, how bitter then will be the re-  
flections of a dying hour; or if there should  
be no time for reflections at that awful season,  
how agonizing and intolerable will they prove  
in the other dark, eternal world—they will be  
like a gnawing *worm that never dies,* or like  
*a fire that cannot be quenched.*

My young friends, the end of all I have  
been saying is this, to guard you against  
youthful sins; the sins to which your age,  
your

your circumstances, your temper, particularly expose you, that you may escape many of these melancholy reflections. Be exhorted then as Paul advises Timothy, *to flee youthful lusts, which war against the soul*: guard against pride and self-conceit, *lean not to your own understanding*—*be clothed with humility*—*obey your parents*—be advised by your friends—take the counsel of your teachers and ministers—associate with the wise and good—watch against that natural levity to which you are prone—do not indulge yourselves to an undue degree in mirth and gaiety, and in an unrestrained pursuit of pleasures and amusements. Whenever you exceed the bounds of wisdom and prudence, be assured it will hurt your mind, injure your character, destroy your confidence in God, spoil the pleasure of prayer, and lay a foundation for future repentance and remorse.—I beseech you above all, never make light of youthful sins; God does not make light of them, and you will not in days to come. The paths of humility, prudence, and piety, will lead you to honour in the world, to a peaceful old age, and a happy eternity. You have been guilty of

many

many of these sins of youth, which I have now specified. Be earnest in prayer, that God would pardon the sins of your youth; that they may not follow you through life, and rise in judgment against you at his bar: pray for the aids of his holy spirit, to preserve you for the future, that you may not repeat your youthful sins and follies. And you may plead with him for this great mercy, saying, *Lord, if thou hast not spared thy own son, but given him up for us all, wilt thou not also with him freely give us all things? If our fathers give good things to their children, wilt thou not much more give thy holy spirit to them that ask it.*—Now is your time to be wise, and good, and happy; you have few cares, you have great advantages; you perhaps know young persons with whom you may associate; you have more aged and experienced friends, who will advise you, and strengthen your hands in God; you have the promises of divine help, of acceptance through Christ, and a crown of glory before you: *stand therefore in these paths; inquire ye for the good old way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls.* Amen.

H Y M N.

## HYMN.

FROM the first dawning light,  
Till the dark ev'ning rise,  
For thy salvation may I wait  
With ever-longing eyes.

Remember all thy grace,  
And lead me in thy truth :  
Forgive the sins of riper days,  
And follies of my youth.

The Lord is just and kind ;  
The meek shall learn his ways —  
And every humble sinner find  
The methods of his grace.

For his own goodness sake  
He saves my soul from shame :  
He pardons (tho' my guilt be great)  
Thro' my Redeemer's name.

## ADDRESS

## A D D R E S S XIII.

### GOD'S GRACIOUS REMEMBRANCE OF THE KINDNESS OF OUR YOUTH.

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JEREMIAH ii. 2.

*Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the  
kindness of thy youth.*

GOD said this of Israel, even after they had revolted from him; and he will much more say it of you, my young friends, if you devote your youthful days to his service, and continue steadfast in his covenant. My design is to shew you that early piety is peculiarly acceptable to God, that there are many reasons why it should be so; and there are many ways in which God will express his regard to, and acceptance of it.

When God says, *I remember thee, the  
kindness of thy youth*, it intimates, that HE  
MARKS THE FIRST OPENING OF RELIGION

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IN THE SOULS OF PIous YOUNG PERSONS.—It is impossible to say how soon young minds may be impressed with divine things, though they cannot form adequate notions concerning the great truths of religion; yet their little hearts may be taught to glow with gratitude and love to God, even when sitting on the lap, or standing at the knee, of a pious and tender parent; and are there instructed to conceive of God, as the kind parent of all, and as loving them better and being more careful of them, than those of whose tenderness and affection every day gives them large experience. Thus they may be taught to love the name of Jesus, when they are told he suffered death in order to deliver them from it; though they know but little of that death from which he delivers, or of that happiness to which he will raise his faithful disciples. In the same manner they may be inspired with an earnest desire of heaven, though they can only conceive of it as a place where there is no pain, or sickness, or death, and where they shall enjoy every thing that can make them happy. And even such infant desires

desires as these shall by no means go unnoticed ; God will remember the first rising wish to know, love, and serve him ; he will observe the first dawning of light and knowledge, and the earliest aspirations of soul after himself, the first fruits of the spirit on the heart, and will by no means despise the day of small things—possibly at that time you scarce knew how to put your thoughts into a regular petition, or what to ask for as you ought ; but God knew the groanings which you could not utter, the unformed wish that centered in himself was more pleasing to him than all the powers of the sublimest eloquence : yes, my young friends, when the seeds of his grace, that may be sown in any of your hearts, shall spring up to a glad harvest of eternal life, you will then be transported with joy, to find that the most feeble of your desires were numbered by your heavenly Father, and recorded for your everlasting advantage in the book of his remembrance.

The words imply further, that God also marks THE PROGRESS WHICH RELIGION MAKES IN THE SOULS OF YOUNG PEOPLE,

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AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT EXPRESSES ITSELF:—he saw how one good impression after another led you on to the great act of self-dedication, of giving yourselves up to God, through Jesus Christ; when you said unto the Lord, *thou art my Lord, and, whatever others do, I will serve thee*, his eye was upon you—he was there, when in the most secret place you have said, *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee, because thy loving kindness is better than life*: he hath seen every act of secret devotion, when retired from the gay and tempting scenes of the world, the overflowings of your grateful heart broke forth into such language as this, *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee? Oh! my Father, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.*

He observes when this kindness of your youth engages you to excercise SELF-DENIAL FOR HIS SAKE:—when as in the words just after our text, it leads you to follow him through the wilderness, through a land that is not sown. Be assured when you submit to this or the other

other difficulty out of regard to him ; when you avoid ensnaring companions, or deny yourselves this or that sinful indulgence *for his name's sake* ; when you try to overcome this or the other evil temper, or bear with patience and cheerfulness the contempt of scorners, or the persecution of the wicked ; when you stand firm to God and his service, in a family where he is dishonoured, in company where religion is ridiculed ; and take up your cross of self-denial, and private prayer, and reading the scriptures, and sanctifying the sabbath—be assured he sees you in all these circumstances with approbation, his arm shall strengthen you, *his grace be sufficient for you*, and his boundless goodness shall at length present you with a reward (not of debt, but of grace), to which you shall gratefully acknowledge all your little sufferings were infinitely disproportioned.

Once more, he remembers with peculiar approbation THE ZEAL WHICH YOU AT ANY TIME HAVE MANIFESTED FOR HIS HONOUR AND GLORY, AND THE GOOD OF OTHERS :—when you have in secret lamented the wicked-

ness around you, and offered up your earnest prayers for any of your relatives or friends, or companions, that God would bring them to repentance and salvation; if any of you have met together for this purpose, to pray for yourselves or others, to converse on the things of God, and strengthen each others hands in him, God was there, *be hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written; and they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels.* When you have attempted to recommend the word of God, or put serious and useful books into the hands of your companions, with a desire of doing good to their souls, God has marked this kindness of your youth, and this your love to those about you; especially when you have at any time had boldness to resist temptations to sin; with an open declaration of your abhorrence of it, when you have had courage to reprove young transgressors, or tendernes and zeal enough to expostulate with them about the evil of their doings, and to recommend the service of God and Christ to them as their best interests, their highest good,

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and truest happiness. When you have told them what pleasure attends his service here, and what a reward will follow it hereafter, and how little the world is capable of affording to balance all this ; whenever and wherever you have done this, and whether your well meant endeavours have succeeded or not, this zeal for God, this kindness of your youth, is written in the records of heaven, and God remembers it to your honour and praise. Such a temper and disposition must be pleasing to God, in whomsoever, and at what age soever, it is found. It is the work of his spirit on the heart, from whom all holy desires and good purposes proceed : it is in some degree the resemblance of his own perfections ; it is something of his image, who *went about doing good* ; but it is peculiarly pleasing to God in young persons, because it is *a rare and uncommon thing*. That dreadful delusion, the hope of a long life, has peculiar advantages for cheating those who are only in the beginning of it ; and they flatter themselves with the hope of *a more convenient season* : their thirst for pleasure, the strength of their pas-

sions, and the feebleness of their judgment, all conspire to make them an easy prey to sin and death; they will not take it on trust that the pleasures of sin are deceitful, and the ways of sin destructive, how ready soever they may be to believe implicitly in other cases. Here alas! they choose to try for themselves, rather than trust the better opinion and greater experience of their wiser friends.—How amiable both in the sight of God and man, is that young person who dares to be singular, who, instead of following a multitude to do evil, chooses the better part, and travels the narrow, and (as he is sometimes ready to think) the almost forsaken path that leads to life. What wisdom does he shew in such a choice? What faith in the promised end, and what confidence in God the faithful promiser? Yes, my young friends, whoever you are, the God of heaven, from amidst the hallelujahs of angels, stoops to view you with pleasure; Jesus smiles on you, and not a breast in all the heavenly world but glows with affection and love to the young adventurer.

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Further, early piety is peculiarly acceptable to God, as IT IS AN EARNEST OF A LONG LIFE TO BE SPENT IN HIS SERVICE, if he sees fit to spare it. The difficulties that attend setting out in any new course of life, are for the most part greater than any which are to be met with in the succeeding part of it; this is especially the case in religion; then evil habits are most difficult to conquer, and evil company to break through, and Christian duty to perform; but when these difficulties are conquered, the probability is stronger that we shall continue steadfast in the ways of religion.

It is true that the corruptions that remain in the hearts of the best, are too prone to bring forth fruit unto death; but those who have, through grace, the victory over some of them, are not so likely to be overcome by the remainder, as those who have never *escaped any of the pollutions of the world, through lust*: besides, God has promised that *he will help them, that he will upbold them, and put his fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from him*. Hence arises a great probability, that those who begin religion young, will long

long continue the ornaments of their profession: there is a docility in youth, and a capacity of improvement in those things to which they apply, which gives them a great advantage over any future age in life.—In religious concerns there is a certain something, I will call it *the kindness of their youth*, which gives animation and vigour to all their pursuits, and particularly fits them for religious improvement, and for receiving the seeds of divine knowledge and grace with peculiar advantage; and accordingly we see in fact that those who have been most eminent for high attainments in religion, began it when young, they entered on a course of piety in their early years. Hence it appears, that a good beginning promises a good ending, and must therefore be pleasing in the sight of God; these young plants of grace *are like trees planted by the rivers of water*, which not only bring forth fruit in their season, but bring it forth to old age, if not plucked up or cut down before their time. Piety itself cannot secure you from death; but this it can do, it will make this foe your friend, it will

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translate you to the paradise of God, where your leaves shall not wither, and where every thing you do shall prosper: this may indeed break off your schemes of usefulness, and your purposes of greater piety and holiness, but still God will remember the kind intention of your youth; here he beholds it and loves it, there he will remember and reward it.

Once more, early piety will be peculiarly acceptable to God, AS IT WILL HAVE A PECULIAR WEIGHT IN RECOMMENDING RELIGION TO OTHERS. What is noble or uncommon attracts attention. Alas! early piety is a novelty in these days. It is recorded of Moses, when he had been in the mount with God, that his face shone, so as to be observed by all; and something like this will be the case with those, who are remarkable for early seriousness, their temper and conduct will be so different from others, that many must observe it; though some may affect to deride them for it, and endeavour to divert the attention of others from them, yet when the beauties of religion come recommended by the charms of youth, they have a lustre

a lustre which almost necessarily attracts the regard of many. How naturally will some inquire what could produce such a change; and how will they wish to partake of those pleasures, which even youth (prone as it is to sensual gratifications) prefer to all the allurements of time and sense. How useful, my young friends, might you be, what a spirit of zeal would your early piety awaken in older christians; what influence might attend your early exhortations to a life of holiness; how cogent would your arguments be in recommending the service of Christ and the ways of religion; and how would your example quicken to greater diligence those, who with more advantages and more years, have made less improvement in religion than you.

I can but just hint at THE WAYS IN WHICH WE MAY REASONABLY EXPECT GOD WILL SHEW HIS REGARD TO, AND APPROBATION OF, EARLY PIETY.—And here let me observe, that you may expect PECULIAR ASSISTANCE IN THE GREAT WORK OF RELIGION. Though evil habits may not have gained that strength in

in you, which they have in older sinners, yet without constant care they will grow and strengthen; but here you have ground to hope for extraordinary help from God; he knows the weakness of your reason, the strength of your passions, the power of temptations, the influence of bad examples, and he will make his grace sufficient for you; sometimes it shall be manifested in keeping you out of temptations, at other times in supporting you in the midst of them; he will preserve some of you by bringing you into religious families and connections, and others by bringing them under the severest afflictions to take away their sins. By one means or other you shall find that God is faithful, who hath promised to keep you from falling; he will be a present help in every time of need. You may also expect **SOME PECULIAR MANIFESTATIONS OF DIVINE FAVOUR AND LOVE TO YOUR SOULS**, and much sweet communion and intercourse with God.—If you ever knew the pleasures of devotion, of humiliation before God, of committing yourselves to his care, of entreating his favour and blessing, of gratitude

gratitude for temporal and spiritual mercies, above all for Jesus Christ, and the hope of eternal life through him; if you ever knew any thing of this, I am persuaded you did not then regret any of the pleasures of sin you had parted with for these; you did not envy the men of the world their carnal enjoyments, nor young sinners all their youthful pleasures; no—your language then was, *whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee*: much of this joy in God, and holy intercourse of soul with him, you have reason to expect. Thus God will repay *the kindness of your youth, and the love of your espousals*: *if any man love me, says Christ, the Father will love him; and I will manifest myself to him, and we will come and make our abode with him*: and how happy must such a soul be?

You may, further, expect PROTECTION IN YOUR PASSAGE THROUGH LIFE.—You may say with David, *the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear; the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid: in the time of my trouble he will aid me; he shall set my feet on a rock; and my head shall be*

*be lifted up above mine enemies round about;*  
and can any thing be more desirable for you  
who are so young, and weak, and ignorant,  
and surrounded with enemies and danger on  
every side? You may also expect such a  
SHARE IN THE BOUNTIES OF PROVIDENCE, AS  
SHALL BE BEST FOR YOU; not every thing  
you wish or pray for, and may justly make  
the matter of your prayer, but those things  
which are really good for you, and which he  
knows will be so better than you do: he will  
*give you grace and glory, and withhold no good  
thing from you, while you walk uprightly before  
him.*

HE WILL ORDER THE TIME OF YOUR DEPARTURE FROM THIS LIFE IN LOVE AND MERCY—whether at an early period he takes you from the evil to come, or spares you to the sufferings and duties of old age, that you may promote his glory; whether you die at your own house, amidst your weeping friends, or at inn, or in the high way, or by a sudden stroke, or a lingering disorder, all shall be ordered by infinite wisdom and love—and some kind angel shall stand waiting to receive your departing spirit, and convey it to those happy

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regions, where affliction and death shall be known no more.

Finally, YOU MAY EXPECT A CROWN PECULIARLY BRIGHT AND GLORIOUS.—If you improve your talents, your youth, your strength, and vigour, for the glory of your master, he will honour you at his appearing, in proportion as you have honoured him here. By every day that you neglect religion now, you proportionably diminish your future glory, and pluck a shining diamond from your eternal crown: doubtless every christian shall shine at last as the stars of the firmament; but those who begin soon, and walk humbly and closely with God all their days, *shall shine as stars of the first magnitude, yea, as suns in the kingdom of their heavenly father;* then you will know infinitely beyond what you can now conceive the import of this gracious promise, *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth:* what a motive is this to early piety. God will notice your first desires after him; he will remember your self-denial, your love, your zeal for him and his glory; he will remember *ALL the kindness of your youth,* to your present and everlasting advantage; but if you forsake him,

him, and walk in the ways of evil men, the sins of your youth will reproach you even to old age; God will remember them, and punish you for them, and they will make bitter work for repentance, either in this world or that which is to come. It is true, that in the ways of religion you may not have so many companions, as in the ways of sin, but you will have more wise ones; you may have your name reproached, and cast out as evil for your religion; but this is no more than your master had before you, even Jesus Christ, and God will remember it for good. In short, you will have many enemies who will lie in wait to deceive and ruin you; but God remembers all this, and you cannot suppose he is less concerned for the safety of his children, than their enemies are concerned for their ruin: *fear not therefore, says God to all his servants, fear not, I am with thee, be not dismayed, I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Wait on the Lord therefore, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your hearts: wait, I say, on the Lord.*

## HYMN.

I Think on all thy kindness, Lord,  
 Which thou hast shown to me ;  
 Remember thou my young desires,  
 And early pray'rs to thee.

Let grace attend my future days,  
 To make my virtues strong ;  
 May life be spent in wisdom's ways,  
 And ended with this song :

“ God of my life, I bless thy name  
 “ For all thy mercies giv'n ;  
 “ Guide of my youth, I trust thy truth  
 “ To bring me safe to heav'n.

ADDRESS

## ADDRESS XIV.

### A REGARD TO SCRIPTURE RECOMMENDED TO YOUTH.

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#### PSALM cxix. 9.

*Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?  
By taking heed thereto according to thy word.*

THIS is a question, my young friends, of the highest importance; it is peculiarly useful and necessary for you as you grow up in life, as you enter into the society of the sinful world, as your passions grow warm, and your temptations to sin increase. The youth who asks this question with seriousness and solicitude, shews at once his modesty, his humility, his good sense, and a virtuous and religious temper of mind. Give me leave to hope that you meet me now with this question in your mouth; and that you will often be asking it with great seriousness

at the fountain of wisdom and knowledge, at the throne of that heavenly Father, who giveth wisdom liberally, and upbraideth not.

THE WORDS INTIMATE THE DANGER TO WHICH YOUNG PERSONS ARE EXPOSED, OF BEING LED INTO PROFANE AND VICIOUS COURSES, AS THEY GROW UP IN LIFE.—He proposes it as a question of great difficulty and of great importance, how a youth may preserve his virtue, and retain the religious principles and temper in which he has been educated, when he goes abroad into a profane and sinful world.

Now the danger and difficulty of doing this arises, in the first place, from THE STRENGTH OF YOUTHFUL PASSIONS. The blood boils, as it were, in the veins of youth; then the passions rise high and become impetuous, then the mind is without fear and without experience, it is indisposed to admit any apprehension of evil, but prone to maintain the most groundless hope of good. In some, one passion prevails above all others, as pride, anger, selfishness, extravagance, sinful indulgences, sensual desires, &c. But every human mind is the seat of all the passions;

and

and whenever a young man falls out into the world, thus hot in temper, and with little knowledge, confident of himself, and insensible of his danger, he walks in slippery places, he runs on the brink of ruin: happy indeed is it where these passions have been early restrained by a good education, awed by a religious one, and directed by a wise one; but even then, my young friends, your passions will be a snare to you.—You are also in great danger FROM THE TEMPTATIONS OF A GAY AND SENSUAL WORLD:—these temptations will meet you in every situation and every path of life; they do not wait in lurking places till the young man seeks them, but they intrude themselves upon him in open day, and in the public walks of life; they occur every where, and they occur in every form that is likely to win upon youthful passions, and to seduce the unguarded into the paths of sin; they address his lusts, his passions, his vanities, his courage, and what he calls his honour. Unexperienced youths are apt to be struck with show and splendour; when the pomps and grandeur of high life

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are played off before their eyes, they are fired with ambition; and when the gaiety and pleasures of sensualists are dressed up for their view, they soon become enamoured with them, and their first walks in the fields of vanity seem to be on enchanted ground. Here the affectionate parent and the religious guardian are full of apprehension and fear: and, my young friends, it is not a groundless fear, it is not a fear that envies you any enjoyment, but that sees and feels your danger; for pleasing and innocent as these scenes of pleasure and sensuality may at first appear to you, they are full of temptations which lie in wait for your character, your health, your reputation, your religion, your immortal soul—and your danger is greater because you do not see it.

Once more, you are in great danger of being led into sinful courses by **THE ENTICEMENT AND COUNTENANCE OF VICIOUS COMPANIONS.** The natural modesty of youth will not at first allow them to commit transgressions, and enter upon scenes of wickedness when alone, which they boldly venture upon when in

in company with profane associates. And the timid youth, who at first only follows the multitude, perhaps with trembling steps, to do evil, will in a little time be a leader in that multitude.—No sooner hath repeated transgression formed a young mind to the habit of wickedness, but he comes forth a bold advocate for vice: and now behold the labour of his life, the ambition of his wit is to decoy the unwary, to seduce the innocent, and spread principles of infidelity and profaneness as fast as he can. The character is not new: Solomon thus strongly expresses the general spirit of the party, and warns young persons of the danger of their company, *Enter not, says he, into the paths of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away; for they sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall.* And so great is the degeneracy of the present age, that there are companies of such in almost every neighbourhood. Malignant sinners of this sort, watch for the ruin of others in every place.

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The business of the world will carry you, my young friends, into a variety of company and connections; but take care whom you make your friends, whom you commonly or frequently associate with. Those who are swearers, drunkards, profane in their conversation, and immoral in their practice, will always dishonour you by a connection with you, and by such connection you make a snare for your own souls. The young man's progress through vice to ruin, commonly begins with his entrance into bad company; from these circumstances, and many others which might be mentioned, you are in danger of polluting your ways.

Let me now explain, and urge upon you, **THAT METHOD WHICH DAVID RECOMMENDS FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE, AS THE BEST MEANS OF CLEANSING YOUR WAY FROM THESE CORRUPTIONS; AND THAT IS, BY TAKING HEED THERETO ACCORDING TO THE WORD OF GOD.**—He recommends this from his knowledge of the power and efficacy of the word of God to this end; and he seems to assure us, that it will be attended with success.

succes. And what David found his security amidst the numerous snares and temptations of his elevated youth, and wealth, and power, and prospects of royalty, will be an equal security to every young mind in every situation of life, if seriously attended to.

For instance, **THE PRECEPTS OF THE WORD OF GOD WILL AFFORD YOUNG PERSONS THE BEST ADMONITIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR THIS PURPOSE.**—The whole book of Proverbs is full of instruction, which is peculiarly adapted to youth, and intended to preserve them from the snares of vice, and to animate them in the pursuit and practice of religious wisdom ; and there are many passages in the nine first chapters which deserve to be committed to memory, and engraven on the hearts : but the whole word of God is excellent for this purpose—wherever the young man reads, still lessons of virtue and religion are before him ; and he hath *line upon line, and precept upon precept.* And these lessons come with peculiar authority upon the mind, as they are the precepts of God, and what he requires our regard to upon pain of his displeasure.

displeasure. There is also a divine purity, and yet a plainness and simplicity in them, which no human precepts can imitate; they prescribe a moral and religious law, not only to our outward deportment, but to our inward temper, and to the passions and thoughts of our hearts. And they are lessons also of kindness to us; we clearly see they are commanded us for our good; we every where perceive them to be written, not with the pen of authority so much, as with the pen of benevolence and grace: and then they are so extensive in their meaning, as to follow us with admonitions and directions to every duty, every temptation, and every virtue of our lives.

Again, THE WORD OF GOD ABOUNDS WITH MANY PLEASING EXAMPLES AND AFFECTING STORIES, WHICH ARE USEFUL TO THE SAME PURPOSE.—The instruction which seems dry in the precept, the young mind reads with pleasing impressions; in the examples of heroic virtue or eminent religion, the scripture story of Joseph is always to be put at the head of these: by retaining the principles and habits of

of his religious education, he was preserved from all temptations of idolatry and wickedness; and, though banished from home, he became useful, and respected, and happy in a strange land.—The example of Solomon was great, because he devoted himself to acquire knowledge, and to the worship of God; and, when a young man, chose wisdom in preference to riches, honours, or beauty.—And those three young men in Daniel are worthy our admiration, who suffered themselves to be thrown into a furnace of fire, rather than be guilty of idolatry in worshipping Nebuchadnezzar's image.—There is an heroism in these characters which confirms the youthful mind in its virtuous and religious principles and practices, and which sets his heart against vice, however it is recommended by the example, or enforced by the authority of others.—In like manner, the beauty, the honour, and pleasure of early religion, is read in the example of Samuel, who was devoted to God from the womb; of Joshua, whose young mind was tenderly affected by the word of God; of the virtuous young man in the

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gospel, whom Jesus loved, because he had kept the law from his yourh; of Mary, who, when a young woman, chose the good part, which could not be taken from her. And we see the most perfect and amiable example of all religion in our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said, as he grew in stature, he grew in favour with God and man.—“ I was formed,” says the great Milton, “ to a most early esteem for virtue, and detestation of vice, by reading examples of heroic chasteity, generosity, and piety.”—And every youth will find early instructions and lasting impressions conveyed to his heart, by these holy examples of the word of God.

Farther, THE WORD OF GOD IS FULL OF RELIGIOUS DOCTRINES, WHICH WILL BE THE GREATEST AND BEST MEANS OF PRESERVING THE MIND FROM YOUTHFUL SINS AND FOLLIES.—It preaches to you, my young friends, the omniscience and omnipresence of God; wherever you go, it assures you that God is there, that he sees you in the most secret places of wickedness, that he searches all hearts, and is acquainted with all

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our ways ; it warns you of the holiness of God, and the terrors of his displeasure ; it follows you in every hour of temptation, with these words of Joseph, *how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.* It bids you fear him, *who can destroy both body and soul in hell.* The word of God also reveals to us a day of future account, and challenges your attention to it in the words of Solomon, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and the sight of thine eyes ; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment :* and it ever admonisheth us by presenting the things of death and eternity frequently to our view, in order to keep the impression of them habitually upon our hearts. Every one grows grave at the thoughts of death, every one stands in awe at the views of eternity ; these thoughts should especially impress the minds of youth ; if you would seriously admit them, they would check every vicious pursuit and restrain every youthful lust. How full is the word of God of these, and every other re-

ligious doctrine which hath power to suppress our sins, to cleanse our way, and to establish us in holiness.

Once more, THE WAY OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST, WITH ALL THE DOCTRINE OF GRACE, AND PROMISES OF GLORY CONNECTED WITH IT, WILL HAVE THE GREATEST TENDENCY ABOVE EVERY THING ELSE, TO AFFECT AND MOULD THE YOUNG MIND TO THE HIGHEST VIRTUE AND NOBLEST ATTAINMENTS IN RELIGION.—The word of God does not only contain precepts and doctrine to guide and instruct us, but a most wonderful and gracious method of salvation, which God hath established through Jesus Christ, for the everlasting benefit of sinful creatures. We see in the gospel the mediation of Christ, beginning in the wonderful humility of his incarnation, executing through the course of his ministry on earth, nobly carried on by the atonement he made for our sins on the cross, happily advancing by his glorious resurrection from the dead and ascension to heaven, and finally to be completed by his second coming to judge the world. If you attend

attend to these things, my young friends, your hearts will be strongly affected by the amazing humility and grace of this divine Saviour, connected with his mediation, all the doctrines, and precepts, and promises of the gospel, will acquire new power over you; here you will find mercy to pardon you, grace to help you, peace to attend you, promises to comfort you, examples to animate you, motives to quicken you, the spirit to sanctify you, and glory to crown *all your works of faith and labours of love.* In all these ways you see the excellency of the word of God to instruct you in the knowledge of religion, to secure you in the practice of religion, and cleanse your ways from all those sins to which you are so constantly allured, and by which you are in great danger of polluting them.

And now let me conclude, by exhorting you to take heed to this word of God; in order to this, you must read it and become familiarly acquainted with it, you must seriously reflect upon and endeavour to understand it, and finally, you must compare your ways and regulate your conduct by it. Your usefulness and happiness in life will depend

upon this; you may be poor, but your poverty will not prevent your being comfortable, and honourable, and happy, provided you are sober, and diligent, and honest, and pious; though you should labour in the lowest stations of life, the providence of God will bless you with peace and comfort, and make you much happier than those who live in the midst of wealth, if they live in luxury and sin: but be sure of this, that your steadiness in virtue and sobriety will depend on your maintaining a sense of religion and a regard to God on your mind; if you forsake God, he will forsake you; if you live without prayer, you cannot expect his succour under temptations, his direction in difficulties, his blessing on your labour. He will be most steadily just in all his dealings, and sober in all his conversation, and secured against every snare of vice, who most fears God, and who sets him always before his eyes. But remember, to be truly religious, and keep up a sense of God on your minds, you must daily read and take heed to the word of God; you must attend to the worship of God, and sanctify his sabbaths; you must never neglect

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secret prayer: if you live in the omission of any of these duties, you will soon be led to forget God, and by forgetting God, you will be easily led into all the ways of sin and misery. He who forgets God, and lays aside his bible, commonly parts with every serious and virtuous principle at the same time. Remember your *Creator in the days of your youth*, and your Creator will always remember and bless you. Amen.

#### HYMN.

**H**OW shall the young secure their hearts,  
And guard their lives from sin?  
Thy word the choicest rules imparts,  
To keep the conscience clean.

When once it enters to the mind,  
It spreads such light abroad,  
The meanest souls instruction find,  
And raise their thoughts to God.

'Tis like the sun, a heavenly light,  
That guides us all the day;  
And, thro' the dangers of the night,  
A lamp to lead our way.

Thy word is everlasting truth,  
How pure is ev'ry page!  
That holy book shall guide our youth,  
And well support our age.

#### ADDRESS

## A D D R E S S . XV.

### YOUNG PERSONS EXHORTED TO ACKNOWLEDGE GOD AS THE GUIDE OF THEIR YOUTH.

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JEREMIAH iii. 4.

*Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.*

THESE words are part of an address to the Israelites in their captivity, in which God, by the Prophet, represents to them the many favours he had conferred upon them when he formed them into a people, educated, defended, and maintained them ; he sets their sins in order before them, especially their idolatry and revolt from God ; and proceeds in the text to give them a most encouraging invitation, to an immediate return to him : this is the connection of the words, nor do I apprehend I shall any way injure or strain them,

them, if I apply them more particularly to your case, my young friends, and urge you to an immediate return to God as your Father, and a resolute choice of him as the guide of your youth. For if it is reasonable and necessary for any persons sensible of their sins, and impressed with the goodness of God, to address him as their Father, it is surely reasonably and necessary for young people to do it. The words import an earnest desire of the guidance of God as your Father, and that this desire is to be expressed before him in fervent prayer; a desire that he would teach you the way in which you should go, guide you through every difficulty and danger, and in every instance manifest himself a friend and helper to you. And I shall urge this regard to God by these two considerations, you greatly need a guide, and he is an all-sufficient one:

Both these are included in the words, **YOUTH GREATLY NEEDS A GUIDE.**—When God calls himself the guide of youth, it intimates that they are not able to direct themselves, that they do not know in every instance the way in which they should go, nor which

which path to take, and are not aware of the danger before them. We are all pilgrims and strangers travelling through this world to another, and every man needs a guide; but the circumstances of youth make them peculiarly liable to err, and render the acknowledgment in the text absolutely necessary; for instance, **THEIR WANT OF JUDGMENT AND EXPERIENCE DOES SO.** It is a wise appointment of Providence that the faculties of our minds should open by degrees, that there may be room for cultivation and improvement, and that new pleasures may be continually tasted. Youth is the learning and improving age; the powers of the soul strengthen slowly, and it is many years before the judgment comes to any degree of maturity; this makes youth so dangerous a time—they are ignorant of themselves, and of the world about them, and are apt to judge by present appearances: hence when they see a broad and beaten road before them, and many travellers in it, they conclude it is the right way, though it leads down to destruction; and they neglect the narrow path of wisdom and.

and righteousness, that leads to everlasting life, because it is so little frequented, and they imagine there are unsurmountable difficulties in it.

Further, THE MANY SNARES AND TEMPTATIONS THAT ATTEND THEIR TIME OF LIFE, MAKE THEM NEED THE DIVINE GUIDANCE:—there is no age free from them, but youth is full of them; the passions are then strong and ungovernable, impatient of restraint, and the unhappy youth lets them rule without control in his bosom.—*Man is born*, says Job, *like a wild ass's colt*, a head-strong, untractable creature, that tosses its head with a confident air, *that snuffs up the wind in the wilderness, and hearkens not to the cry of the driver*, is unwilling to be brought under any discipline. Young persons are prone to be rash and head-strong, and to walk in *the way of their hearts and the sight of their eyes*; and then the objects that present themselves to their view are suited to this disposition, and have often a bad influence to corrupt their minds: they are fond of novelty and pleasure, every new scene engages their attention. The  
sociability

sociability of youth; their love of company, especially those of their own age, is a very dangerous snare, as it exposes them to think their knowledge and experience sufficient, being equal to that of their associates; they love that company best where they find most amusement and least restraint, and where every one may do what seemeth right in his own eyes, without control. These things plainly shew that young people are not sufficient to guide themselves; and who then must they trust? must they submit to their companions and friends as the guide of their youth, when they are as liable to err and be deceived as themselves? Some of them perhaps may be blind guides, and lead you to mischief and ruin. Your parents, I own, have a better claim to this title of guides than any other; but perhaps some of you have the great infelicity to have irreligious parents, who never took care of their own souls, and therefore utterly neglected your best interests: others of you have descended from pious fathers and mothers, and you have enjoyed their counsels, example, and prayers; they have

have been and are still ready to point out to you your errors and dangers, and I hope you will always attend to them; but consider they are but fallible creatures, and cannot always tell what is best to be done: some of them may be but poor advisers, may have wrong ends in view or use, wrong means to bring about what is right; others are too negligent of their duty in this respect, or too much taken up with the business and cares of the world to attend to it; besides they cannot always be with you, or may soon be taken from you, or you from them. And even where they are wise and good, and are ready to exhort and watch over you, and wish to see you adorned with a meek, devout, and industrious spirit, yet still there is **A SAD PROPENSITY IN YOUTH TO NEGLECT SUCH WISE AND USEFUL GUIDES**, and despise the counsels of ministers, parents, and friends; they imagine their injunctions too strict, their restraints unnecessary, and they are ready through that pride (which is one of the governing sins of youth) to think themselves as wise as their teachers, and that

no one is more likely to be infallible than themselves. If you will, my young friends, with modesty and humility consider these particulars, and compare them with what you feel in yourselves, or see in those about you, I think you will soon perceive the reasonableness of God's address in the text: *wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth;* especially when you consider that GOD IS AN ALL-SUFFICIENT GUIDE; he is able to be the guide of your youth, for his understanding is infinite—he knows every danger that lies in your way, and observes the snares that your subtle enemies are laying for you. When you are in perplexity he can make the path of duty plain, and influence your mind to make a wise and proper choice: as a father pities his children, so he pities you amidst the snares and temptations to which you are exposed, and the enemies and dangers that surround you. He is able to guide you in the most intricate case, and to defend you against the most formidable evils; AND HE IS DISPOSED AND WILLING TO DO SO, and lead you

*you in the path of righteousness, for his name sake.* He invites you to call him your Father, and will he not own the relation? Can you suppose an earthly parent, of common affection, would call his child to come to him for directions, and then spurn him away, or give him directions that would lead him into danger? And can you imagine so of the Father of our spirits, when the language of his grace is, come near, my children, that I may guide and bless you. Besides this, you have his express promise, (*Psalm xxv. 9.*) *the meek be will guide in judgment, and the meek will be teach his way;* that is, humble souls who are sensible of their ignorance and danger, and apply to him. So (*in Psalm xxxvii. 23.*) *the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, the Lord upholds him with his hand, so that none of his steps shall slide.* Compare also *Prov. iii. 6. in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths;* an exhortation addressed to young people by the wisest of men. From hence it appears that if you with humility and seriousness acknowledge God, and pray to him, he will guide you

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continually; and when you are in danger of turning to the right hand or left, out of the path of duty and holiness, *you shall hear as it were a voice behind you saying, this is the way, walk ye in it.*

Thus you have seen, my young friends, how much you need a guide of your youth, and how able and willing God is to be so to you. Let me now mention to you ~~SOME~~ SEASONS WHEN IT IS PECULIARLY PROPER AND NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS ADDRESS TO GOD WITH MORE THAN ORDINARY SOLEMNITY:—it is indeed never improper to make it; it is always necessary to own God and to have your eyes ever towards him.

It is peculiarly proper to do it WHEN GOD IS MAKING GOOD IMPRESSIONS ON YOUR MIND BY HIS ORDINANCES OR PROVIDENCES. This I hope is the case with many of you, that God is speaking powerfully to your conscience, by the admonition of your friends and the exhortations of those that speak to you in this way. May we not hope that this or the other discourse touches your hearts, fixes some strong convictions there of the evil of

sin

sin and the beauties of holiness; these are precious seasons, and oh! be careful to improve them; let not these impressions wear off, but be cherished and attended to, that they may lead you to repentance, and bring your wandering feet to God.

DOES GOD SEND AFFLICTION UPON YOU AS HE DID UPON THE ISRAELITES, TO BRING YOU TO HIMSELF, AND TO HUMBLE AND SOFTEN YOUR SPIRIT? Does he afflict you in body, or disappoint you in earthly concerns and human dependencies? All these things are the calls of your heavenly Father, to return to him, and repose the confidence of your souls in him as the guardian and guide of your youth: be careful then to hearken to his voice and harden not your hearts.

Again, WHEN YOU ARE ENTERING ON NEW SCENES OF LIFE, it is peculiarly proper to say, *from this time will I cry unto thee, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.* Every new scene is dangerous to young minds, for want of a ripened judgment and a regular government of the passions. Some of you may soon remove to new settlements

and places of abode; you may be soon removed from under the eye and care of your parents, masters, ministers, and teachers, whose admonitions and examples you have long enjoyed: this I look upon to be the most dangerous time for young men, when they come to have unusual liberty, when they get in some measure above restraint, and become their own masters, never are they in greater hazard, never do they so much want direction; *and will you not at this time cry unto God, my Father thou art the guide of my youth.*—In new places of abode you will find new and unexpected temptations, dangers that you are not aware of. Parents and friends can only pray for you, and write to you in general; but God is always near to you, ready to hear your cry, and direct and prosper you in all your undertakings and employments.

HAVE ANY OF YOU ANY AFFAIRS OF DIFFICULTY OR IMPORTANCE TO TRANSACT; affairs which require a great deal of prudence and thought, lift up your hearts to God, that he would lead you in a plain path, and give you

you a wise and understanding heart. Let the language of the pious prince Jehoshaphat be yours, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are up unto thee.

ARE ANY OF YOU OBLIGED TO LIVE IN FAMILIES WHERE THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD, and to be frequently with those who have no sense of religion, who are profane and wicked; as your danger is great, let your sanctity be great too, and let your prayers be the more earnest, that God would secure you from evil, and make you an instrument of reforming others; be often adopting that petition of the Psalmist (in *Psalm cxix. 133*), *order my steps in thy word, and let not any iniquity have dominion over me.*

Once more, WHEN GOD HAS BROUGHT YOU SAFELY TO THE CLOSE OF ONE YEAR AND COMMENCEMENT OF ANOTHER—will you not from this time cry unto God, and say, *my Father, thou art the guide of my youth.* His goodness in prolonging your lives, continuing your health and comforts, and sparing your parents and friends, claims your gratitude; your former neglects, the vanity of

of childhood and youth, and the many errors with which conscience must charge you, ought to be seriously and deeply lamented, and *from this time* you ought more seriously and steadily to look up to God, as *the guide of your youth*.—Let the beginning of a new year, or any remarkable period of time, be made more remarkable still; and a period that shall afford you, and your parents, and ministers, and teachers ground for joy, by your entering on such a conduct, as I have now been earnestly recommending, and pursuing it with the greatest steadiness and alacrity.

And now, my young friends, *for whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you*, and till you are wise, and holy, and happy, let me exhort you to **ADORE THE GOODNESS OF GOD, IN THE ENCOURAGEMENT HE GIVES YOU TO PUT CONFIDENCE IN HIM AS YOUR GUIDE.** I would have you put yourselves under his protection, submit to his teachings, and follow his guidance: this is great condescension in him who formed the heavens and the earth, rolls the world of light in

in their several orbs, directs the motions of the earth, presides over the bright intelligences of heaven, who all rejoice and are happy in his guidance; yet he regards the meanest of men, condescends, as it were, to take you by the hand, and teach you to go; he has called you to him again and again by the power of reason and choice that he has given you, and the exhortation of your parents and ministers. You were given up to him in baptism; and many of you have had *line upon line* and *precept upon precept*, through all your rising years—all these demand your thankfulness. And the tender mercies of your Creator should engage you to remember and serve him in the days of your youth.—But I must not enlarge.

I shall conclude, with renewing my application to you, my young friends, and once more inquiring of you, **WILL YOU NOT FROM THIS TIME CRY UNTO GOD, MY FATHER, THOU ART THE GUIDE OF MY YOUTH.**—It is recorded to the immortal honour of Josiah (*2 Chron. xxxiv. 3.*), that notwithstanding the corrupt state of Israel,  
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and the bad example of a very wicked father, *that while he was yet young he began to seek after the God of his father David*; a most charming example, which I wish you would think upon and imitate, amidst such corruptions of manners as abound among us.—

**Y**OU, WHO HAVE NEGLECTED GOD HITHERTO, *who have walked in the way of your heart and the sight of your eyes*, without consulting him, and desiring his guidance, have run into innumerable follies, that at times vex and pain you, will you not from this time say unto God, *my Father, thou art the guide of my youth*. Do not put it off to a more convenient season, but do it immediately; can you find a better time to make an humble acknowledgment of your errors, an hearty dedication of yourselves to God, and begin your serious regards to him as *the guide of your youth*: When God is ready to direct you, will you say, I will venture on by myself, I will pursue my old course, some time or other I will seek to him, but not now; but pray consider, young friends, may you not wander too far ever to return? may not God let you alone.

alone and refuse to guide you, if you slight the present offer? may you not fall into the pit of hell for want of this guide, as multitudes are doing every day? why shall not this then be the happy day of your espousals to God? I beseech you not to act so mad a part, as to put off serious consideration till you know not when; this may be the last time God may send you such a message as this. You may in *the greatness of your course sink and perish*; and remember, there is no road out of the pit of hell, no guide from thence, no release from those torments. Be not then *as the horse or the mule, that hath no understanding, that runs rashly into danger without fear*; but consider and shew yourselves men, and bring to mind this kind invitation of God, *O ye transgressors.*

And as to you, WHO HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED GOD, AND GIVEN YOURSELVES UP TO HIM AS THE GUIDE OF YOUR YOUTH, be thankful that he has inclined you so to do, be thankful that he has instructed you; *be taught you the way in which you should go, and guided you with his eye*: go on to acknowledge him, cry to him, and

and trust in him; you know not what difficulties and dangers are still before you. I hope you do not think you are so wise and steadfast, as not to need the direction and defence of heaven. Attend to those words (in *Isaiah xl. 30.*), *those that boast of their strength shall faint and be weary, and the young men (conceited as they may be of their wisdom and resolution) shall utterly fall; but they that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount on wings as eagles, shall run and not be weary, and walk and not faint.* Wait on God therefore continually, and he shall preserve you from evil, secure you from the pollution that is in the world through lust, fit you for useful stations in life, and make you a blessing to your friends, to the church, and to the world.—To conclude, *trust in the Lord at all times, and pour out your hearts before him, then will he lead you in a safe and pleasant path, and to a happy end; and you may rejoice and triumph in every danger and difficulty, as the Psalmist did (Psalm xlvi. 14.), this God is our God for ever and ever; and will be our guide unto death.* Amen.

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GOD from on high our human state surveys,  
He sees us wand'ring in a thorny maze :—  
A dang'rous path, all must adventure through—  
Its straight--and set with ills conceal'd from view.

On either side the dreadful steep appears—  
The precipice of sin—the vale of tears :—  
O what afflicting pow'r, what faithful friend,  
Will safe conduct us to our journey's end ?

God pitying calls, “ Me for your guardian choose : ”  
Father, I come, nor will thy help refuse—  
In thee alone my confidence repose,  
Who all my danger, all my safety knows.

To thee I'll seek with ever-ardent pray'r,  
And in thy breast deposit all my care ;  
Thy counsels wait, thy providence attend—  
My Father thou, and never absent friend.

Guide of my youth ! to thee my footsteps move,  
Embrace thy offspring with paternal love ;  
Reach thy kind hand my feeble steps to guide,  
Smooth the rough path, and turn each snare aside.

Bid the bold tempter at a distance stand,  
And Vice retire with its polluting band ;  
Till through the gate of death securely led,  
Thou bind a crown of glory on my head.

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ADDRESS

## ADDRESS XVI.

PECULIAR OBLIGATIONS TO SERVE GOD,  
ARISING FROM BEING DESCENDED FROM  
HIS SERVANTS.

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PSALM CXVI. 16.

*O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid.*

Men are very prone to value themselves upon their descent, when they can trace their families through a few generations, and number among their ancestors, persons who have worn some title of honour, or held some places of trust and profit; and will sometimes ascribe more to themselves than was even due to their ancestors, on account of such distinctions. But the noblest descent is from the faithful servants of God, and that is in truth the most honourable family in which religion has been professed, supported, and adorned

adorned from generation to generation: such a descent brings along with it great honour, if our own folly does not turn it into shame, and great advantages, if we do not wilfully throw them away—yet both are possible; for it brings with it a great obligation to serve God, and imitate the piety of our ancestors. *Lord, I am thy servant*, says David—thine by many obligations, as appears from the context; and particularly as *the son of a pious mother, who was thine handmaid*. It is as if he had said, “Lord, I am descended from thy servants, therefore thou hast a peculiar claim to me as thine, and I willingly own it.” This is the case with some of you, my young friends; and I beg leave at this time to shew you how great your privilege is—how few enjoy it—and how vain it will be except you serve God yourselves.

YOUR PRIVILEGE IS VERY GREAT, PARTICULARLY  
AS YOUR PIUS PARENTS EARLY DEVOTED  
YOU TO GOD;—THIS THEY DID THEMSELVES, AND  
IN A SOLEMN MANNER, BEFORE SEVERAL WITNESSES,  
AND SOME OF THEM IN THE FACE OF A WHOLE

congregation (besides what they did in private): they acknowledged you as the children that God had graciously given them; they owned his right to you as his creatures and the subjects of his gospel kingdom; and with great seriousness declared their desire that you might have the seal of the covenant applied to you, as a token of your standing in a covenant relation to God and Christ, and being entitled to gospel blessings, the providential care of Christ, the influences of his spirit, and the hope of glory. At the same time they expressed their full resolution to train you up in God's service. Now it was surely a great privilege to be acknowledged by a right of divine appointment, as the servants of God, as *a holy seed*, as separated for him, and in covenant with him; and if you have seriously thought on what was then done, it must tend to make pious impressions on your hearts, and shew you how reasonable it is *that you should serve the Lord*.—In consequence of this early dedication, THEY INSTRUCTED YOU IN GOD'S SERVICE:—as your understanding opened, they frequently gave you

you a general idea of God your Creator, of Christ your Redeemer, of the design of your baptismal dedication, and of your duty; they taught you early to read, that you might from your childhood know the scriptures, which they often told you were the words of God; they also instructed you in some form of sound words, in which the principles and duties of religion were contained in a short compass, and set in an easy light, to assist your judgment and help your memory; they put such little books into your hand as had a tendency at once to strike, entertain, and improve your minds; they taught you to pray, and directed you to fix your dependence on divine grace, to enlighten and purify your hearts; they taught you to keep the sabbath holy, brought you to the house of God, and explained to you the nature and end of public ordinances; they admonished you when you did evil, and encouraged and rewarded you when you did well; they warned you by many sad examples of the misery of sinners which occurred to your notice, and animated you by the pious behaviour, high esteem, and

peaceful end of good men, whom you had seen and known. These advantages you have enjoyed; and they were intended to bias your hearts in favour of religion, and engage you to make God's service your early, deliberate choice.

THEY OFTEN PRAYED WITH YOU AND FOR YOU—they well knew this was their duty; and the scripture examples of Abraham, Job, David, and others, excited and encouraged them to it: they were often earnest in prayer with God for you, before you knew what they were doing; and since you were capable of observing and understanding, you have no doubt often heard them in their family worship praying for you in particular, expressing their desires, fears, and hopes on your account before God, in order to impress their own hearts more deeply with the care of your education—to impress yours with a concern for yourselves, and to engage the divine blessing: they rejoiced before God when they saw any good thing in you towards him, and they mourned when it was otherwise. And now recollect with yourselves what

what was the drift of their prayers ; was it that you might be rich, and great, handsome, and honourable ?—you know it was not. It was that you might serve God, behave as rational and immortal creatures, be wise, holy, and happy : to have had so large a share in such prayers, is an inestimable blessing, and they will avail much, unless you counteract them.

Again, **THEY SET GOOD EXAMPLES BEFORE you.**—It was their care to behave themselves wisely and uprightly, that you might see no evil in them ; but learn wisdom and goodness by their example. They often reminded you of the piety of your remote ancestors ; and urged you not to lose the hereditary glory of your family : they have shown you that religion is practicable, that it was not impossible to *live soberly, righteously, and godly*, and to *keep themselves unspotted from the world* : they have shown you that religion was amiable and lovely ; you have seen how much it contributed to their honour, peace, and joy ; you have probably witnessed how patiently and courageously they have borne some heavy afflictions,

afflictions, and *kept their faith and a good conscience*. And if you have had the misfortune to lose one or both of your parents in early life, you have perhaps seen them *finish their course with joy*, lamented by good and bad, and their memory blessed.

Once more, YOU HAVE PROBABLY ENJOYED SOME PECULIAR ASSISTANCE FROM THE SPIRIT OF GOD—agreeable to his promise, *to pour out his spirit on the children of his people*.—God has early worked upon some of your minds, exciting good inclinations, producing strong convictions when you did evil, stirring you up to pray for yourselves; he has often brought to your remembrance your parents instructions and example; he has followed you with secret warnings and admonitions, when amidst the vanity of youth you have forgotten God and your duty, associated with sinners, and have been in danger of learning their ways. These are the privileges and advantages that some of you have probably enjoyed, either from your own parents, or from your ministers, your teachers, or kind and pious friends; and the greater they have been,

been, the stronger and more numerous are your engagements to be God's servants. It is what both God and man reasonably expect from you; and you will be ungrateful to God, and your parents, and your pious friends—you will disappoint their hopes, and be on many accounts highly criminal and inexcusable, if you forget God's service; especially **WHEN YOU CONSIDER HOW FEW ENJOY THESE PRIVILEGES.** When the Psalmist would inculcate upon the Israelites, gratitude and obedience to God, because he had given them his law, he observes (*Psalm cxlvii. 20*), *be not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments they have not known them.* And this thought I would now urge upon you with the same view, to promote your gratitude and obedience. I need not mention to you the children of Heathens and Mahometans, for many children in this protestant land are brought up as bad as they; they are bred up, as well as *born, like the wild ass's colt*—left to run wild like savages, and to pick up what knowledge they can. You need not go to other nations or places to know

know how great your privileges have been; look about you, and you will find in this town, in every street and every neighbourhood, numbers of poor, ignorant, and brutish children, whose parents are teaching them by precept and example, to curse and swear, talk lewdly and insolently, to lye, drink, and steal—and *are their counsellors to do wickedly.* (2 Chron. xxii. 3) Instead of praying for them, they are often cursing them; and instead of bringing them to public worship, they suffer them to profane the sabbath as they please: and as for many parents, of better sense and manners, religion is a thing they teach their children with the least care; to dress, and dance, game, and get money, are the principal things taught them; and to lay up a fortune for them is their parents principal concern. As they grow up, they take no care in the disposal of them; but place them out as servants or apprentices in irreligious families, or marry them to those *who fear not God*—for *filthy lucre's sake*.—Now, my young friends, how has your case differed from that of the generality.

generality of children; and do you owe nothing to your parents or to God for this? has he not laid upon you for these great, distinguishing, and singular favours? surely he has, and I hope you will never forget it; especially when you consider HOW VAIN THESE PRIVILEGES WILL BE IF YOU DO NOT SERVE GOD—without this your honour in being descended from such ancestors will be lost; you never can with any face glory in them. For as Dr. Young beautifully expresses it,

“They that on glorious ancestors enlarge,  
Produce their debt, instead of their discharge.”  
You must shine in hereditary worth, and tread in their steps, or else your birth and education will turn to your reproach.  
Again, YOU HAVE NO REASON TO EXPECT THE CONTINUANCE OF DIVINE GRACE AND FAVOUR, IF YOU DO NOT EXERT YOUR BEST ENDEAVOURS:—if you break the covenant, God is under no obligation to perform his part of it. Of this I warn you as David warned his son Solomon, that if he *forsook the God of his Fathers, he would cast him off for ever.* Nay, these privileges will increase

crease your guilt and future misery, if you do not serve God; *having known your Lord's will, and not done it, you will be beaten with many stripes.* And in that place of weeping and wailing, into which the wicked shall be cast, none will lament so bitterly as the degenerate children of pious ancestors; for they are ungrateful and disobedient to God and their parents, resist many strong convictions, violate many good resolutions, and quench and grieve the spirit of God; they contradict the design of Providence, in giving them these advantages; nay, they afford occasion to the enemies of religion to triumph, discourage parents from giving their children a good education, when they see some that enjoyed it turning out as bad as others; and they harden their fellow sinners in their wickedness. And indeed the degenerate children of good men generally prove the worst of men, and run the greatest lengths in sin; and this they do sometimes of choice, to silence the clamours of an accusing conscience, and to shew to all about them, that they have shaken off the yoke of wisdom and virtue.

And

And God often gives them up to a reprobate mind and a feared conscience, and leaves them standing monuments of his awful displeasure. In short, this is the rule of the divine proceeding, that *to whom much is given, of them much shall be required*; and that men shall be judged hereafter according to their privileges and obligations.

And now as a serious and affectionate application of these things, let me in the first place address THE CHILDREN OF STRANGERS —those young persons who have not enjoyed these privileges; some of you, I fear, have enjoyed none of them, and some of you but few of them; nevertheless you are indispensably obliged to serve God, for you have reason and conscience, bibles and ministers, that instruct and warn you. Perhaps you live or have lived in religious families, and have had instructions, prayers, and good examples there; or some pious relatives or friends may have given you kind admonitions on this head, and therefore you are without excuse, if you do not serve and glorify God. If you are in deed and truth endeavouring

to serve him, according to your knowledge and advantages, you have great reason to adore his grace, who hath inclined you to it, *and plucked you as a brand out of the burning.* If you have yet lived in disobedience to him, you have encouragement now to return to him; for thus he hath said (*Isaiah lvi. 6*), *also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord to serve him, to love his name, to be his servants, who keep the sabbath from polluting it, and take hold of God's covenant, even them will I make joyful in my house of prayer, and accept their services.* And there is a remarkable instance for your encouragement in *1 Kings xiv. 13.* where God says of Abijah, the son of wicked Jeroboam, *that he only of all the family should come to the grave in peace, because in him was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.*

Let me next address a few words to THE DEGENERATE CHILDREN OF GOD'S SERVANTS — I fear there are some such here; and I own I have very little hopes of addressing myself to them, but God is sometimes pleased to make them the monuments of his mercy, as

as in the case of Manasseh, Hezekiah's son. Hear then for a little while what I have to say unto you, *and be not a generation of vipers*, that his at, and would sting the hand that is willing to save them.—You have by your conduct renounced your parents dedication of you to God, broken the bonds of religion asunder, forsaken the God of your fathers, are serving divers lusts and pleasures, and are become the companions of fools. Your parents, if yet living, are mourning over you in the bitterness of their souls; and you are *bringing their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave*. And do you thus requite them for all their love and tenderness? *Do you thus requite the Lord, like foolish people and unwise?* Though you have turned aside from the good way, you cannot so easily forget that you were trained up in it; your conscience will sometimes bring your privileges to mind, tell you that you are acting the maddest part imaginable—and thus they will now torment you; and they will torment you more hereafter. God will write bitter things against you, and make you to possess the

*iniquity of your youth, and you will be of all sinners the most miserable; but bad as your case is, it is not hopeless: this is the language of God, return ye backsliding children, for I am merciful and gracious. To-day, therefore, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; go and humble yourselves before him this evening, and take with you these suitable words of the Psalmist (Psalm lxxxvi. 16), turn unto me, and have mercy upon me, and save the son of thine handmaid. And may God by his almighty grace restore your souls, that the sorrow of your parents may be turned into joy; and that they may say of you as the father of the prodigal, this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.*

I conclude with one word to the pious children of God's servants.—Be thankful, my young friends, for your privileges, and that God has given you grace to improve them; but remember your goodness ought to be in proportion to your advantages, and it is expected from you that you should do more than others. *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation: Satan will be peculiarly busy*

busy to get an advantage over such as you, his servants will be peculiarly active to corrupt you, and take a diabolical pleasure in it; *but stick to God's testimonies*; consider what has led others astray who have had your advantages, and you will find it has been either self-conceit, idleness, or evil company, or all of them together. Guard against these things, and *be not high-minded, but fear*; remember what you have been so often told, that watchfulness over your own hearts, ardent prayer, and a strict observance of the sabbath, are the great supports of the life of religion, and under God the best security for your steadfastness in his service.—I conclude, with addressing you as David did his son Solomon, in those words in *1 Chron. xxviii, 9.* (which need often to be repeated and carefully remembered), *and thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.*

## H Y M N.

HOW much is mercy thy delight,  
 Thou ever-blessed God !  
 How dear thy servants in thy sight !  
 How precious is their blood !

How happy all thy servants are !  
 How great thy grace to me !  
 My life, which thou hast made thy care,  
 Lord, I devote to thee.

Now I am thine, for ever thine,  
 Nor shall my purpose move ;  
 Thy hands hath loo'st my bands of pain,  
 And bound me with thy love.

Here in thy courts I leave my vow,  
 And thy rich grace record ;  
 Witness ye saints, who hear me now,  
 If I forsake the Lord.

ADDRESS

the goal of my efforts. But, Sir, how  
can you tell now that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~ambassador~~  
~~ambassador~~

**A D D R E S S XVII.**

Friend, what brood will the ~~ambassador~~ <sup>ambassador</sup> of the  
Empire still now strive to convey to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~ambassador~~  
**A HOPEFUL YOUTH FALLING SHORT OF  
HEAVEN.**

**MARK x. 21.**

*Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said  
unto him, One thing thou lackest.*

**M**Y young friends, give me your serious  
attention, while I illustrate the Re-  
deemer's love to this well-disposed youth—  
while I shew you the deficiency of his  
character, and direct you to a suitable im-  
provement of this affecting subject.—From  
comparing the accounts given us by the  
several Evangelists, we find that he was a  
young person of very considerable fortune,  
he had large possessions, and was also a ruler  
or magistrate; he came to inquire of the  
Redeemer (whom he considered as a wise and  
good teacher) *what he should do to inherit  
eternal*

*eternal life.* Christ directs him to keep the commandments; and upon his further inquiry what they were, our Lord mentions the commandments of the second table, because the observance of these was little regarded among the Jews, and their spiritual nature and extent not at all understood, as appears by our Lord's sermon on the mount. The young man then said, *all these have I kept from my youth, or infancy; what lack I yet?* Then the Evangelist tells us, *Jesus beholding him, loved him;* that is, our Lord approved, and took complacency in what was amiable and excellent in him: he was pleased to see him serious and thoughtful, glad to find that he began so well, and was willing to receive further instruction; but still this complacency was mixed with pity and compassion, from that mixture of vanity, arrogance, and worldly mindedness he saw in him, and the danger to which he was liable of *making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience,* for the love of the world: his regard was that of approbation and compassion mingled together.

Now

Now there were many things AMIABLE AND ENGAGING IN THIS YOUNG GENTLEMAN, which excited these regards from the son of God ; his address and inquiry were very engaging, the errand he came upon was the most solemn and important imaginable, to know *what he should do to inherit eternal life.* It was a subject that lay with great weight upon his mind, and he seemed willing to submit to any terms in order to secure it. What made this inquiry the more engaging, was the uncommonness of the thing, especially in persons of his circumstances. The rich and great too often neglect these things ; it was more uncommon to find such an inquiry made by a young person, since youth is so often giddy and thoughtless, so intent upon the pleasures and amusements of life, as to neglect religion ; or if they should have any serious thoughts about it, they think it will be time enough to mind it, and make inquiry about it hereafter, when they have done with the pleasures of life, and begin to grow old. But here was a rich and honourable young man, who, in that corrupt age of the Jewish church

church and nation, had behaved soberly, and was solicitous about his soul and heaven: a very rare sight indeed! *Jesus beholding him, loved him.*

Further, THE MANNER OF HIS ADDRESS WAS VERY RESPECTFUL AND AGREEABLE:—he came running to Christ with an eager desire to see and converse with him, before he left those parts; he kneeled before him with reverence and respect, addressed him with the greatest civility and modesty, expressed his veneration for him as an excellent teacher. The charms of his graceful person, and the marks of a serious spirit united, made his address peculiarly pleasing; especially as it seemed to be delivered with great earnestness, and a very solicitous concern of mind.

Further, HIS GOOD BEGINNING WAS VERY PROMISING AND ENCOURAGING:—he had received a good education, and had well improved it; he had been sober, temperate, chaste, and honest, and free from doing his neighbour any designed injury. Amiable youth! he wished to know what further he had to do: *what lack I yet?* To see so  
young

young a person, amidst all the temptations arising from his exalted station and affluent circumstances, maintaining so fair a character, and under such concern about another world, engaged the affections of our blessed Lord: *Jesus beholding him, loved him.*

But let me now shew you THE DEFICIENCY OF THIS YOUNG MAN'S CHARACTER.—*Jesus said unto him, one thing thou lackest*—the main, the chief thing was wanting, which was sincere piety, a real principle of religion. And the text may be illustrated by what Christ says to Martha (*Luke x. 42*), *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful.* And Christ, in order to shew the young man the defect of his character, that his heart was not right, and his principles not good, commanded him to go and sell what he had, *and give to the poor*, assuring him that in so doing he should have a more durable and excellent treasure in heaven; and adds, *come and follow me*, to partake of my farther instructions, and be directed in the way to that eternal life about which thou seemest to be so much concerned:

concerned: but when he heard that, he was sad, and went away sorrowful. It seems he did not understand the spiritual nature of the divine law, did not imagine that it extended further than the external actions; and never thought it designed to control the passions, and suppress the irregular desires and wishes of the heart; he thought it was sufficient to be sober, just, and honest, as far as men could judge, or else he never would have talked so inconsiderately, never have said *all these things have I kept from my youth.* It plainly appears that he had a predominant love to his possessions; he had that love of the world which plainly shewed that *the love of God was not in him*, or that would have led him cheerfully to have resigned his wealth at the divine command. Amidst all those hopeful circumstances we considered under the former head, his heart was entangled with, and so fixed to his wealth; that he could not disengage himself from it; he valued his possessions more than eternal life; for the sake of his riches he forsook his Saviour, and lost his soul: this

was

was the parting point—he was almost a christian; but his love to his riches excluded him from the kingdom of heaven. Fatal wealth! and foolish possessor!

Let me now, my young friends, direct you to a suitable improvement of this affecting story. And here you must easily see (first) **WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT ARISES FROM HENCE FOR YOUNG PERSONS TO INQUIRE THE WAY TO HEAVEN.**—We have already observed that it is a very important inquiry, and what the Son of God, that holy one, and the great friend and lover of souls, will be particularly pleased with. Nothing gives greater satisfaction to good men (especially those who have the interest of religion warmly at heart) than to see their children walking in the truth, to hear their young souls making the convinced gaoler's inquiry their own—*what shall I do to be saved*—and making it with earnestness, as those that are sensible of the value of their souls, and the danger they are in of being seduced and ruined. This must give the highest satisfaction to the Redeemer, whose soul is full of the most exalted benevolence.

lence, and most just concern for the honour of God and the salvation of mankind.—I hope it is your desire and endeavour to secure the esteem and affection of all men, as far as you honestly and prudently can—this will undoubtedly be your wisdom ;—be concerned about your souls and your eternal state, and you will then certainly secure the esteem and good opinion of all wise and good men, and will be the objects of your Redeemer's love. He would have you be solicitous principally about this, *what you must do to inherit eternal life* ; for you are made for eternity, you have each an immortal soul within you, that must be happy or miserable for ever. Eternal life and eternal death the Son of God has plainly set before you ; and the language of his lips, his actions, and his sufferings, is, *choose life that you may live*.—It is necessary to make this inquiry, because it is a matter of infinite moment, and not only so, but you are in danger of being deceived ; you may have wrong notions of eternal life, or the way to it. Young minds are ready to be taken up with every thing that is gay or glittering ; and those

images

images and metaphors, under which heaven and its glories are represented in scripture, to adapt them to our capacities, may take so much with young and ignorant minds, that they may forget or overlook those important realities which are veiled under those images. Without serious attention and inquiry they may not be convinced that the future state of happiness is a state of perfect virtue, likeness to God, the most refined devotion, and extensive benevolence, and therefore may forget that the practice of christian virtues is absolutely necessary to qualify them for it; and that it is as necessary to get a habit of these virtues to qualify them for heaven, as it is to learn those arts and sciences in their youth, which they intend to spend their days in the exercise and pursuit of.

Again, JESUS CHRIST IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH MANIFESTED A PARTICULAR AFFECTION FOR SERIOUS YOUTHS—witness the young man in our text. His bosom friend among all the Disciples was John, the youngest of the happy train. He shone in the world as full of grace and truth; and he has the same

affection amidst all the glories of his exalted station ; he takes notice of the least *good thing* towards the *Lord God of Israel*, in young hearts ; he is pleased with the dawning of goodness, *does not despise the day of small things*, and *never breaks the bruised reed*, nor *quenches the smoaking flax*.—To this compassionate Saviour you are to apply with this great question, *what shall I do*. You are to consult his word, and pray for his spirit to guide and direct you. This is the way to inquire of Christ, since he hath left the world and is gone to his Father. Let me add for your encouragement what the text suggests, that our Lord is ready to answer the inquiry and direct your conduct ; thus he did the young man in our text. The New Testament is the voice of Christ speaking to you ; it tells you what eternal life is, and how it is to be obtained. *Let the word of Christ then dwell richly in you* ; and labour from your early years to gain an acquaintance with the holy scriptures, that *are able to make you wise unto salvation*. He has also another method of instruction, which is by his spirit, of whom you so often read and hear ; this invisible agent

agent impresses good thoughts and dispositions upon the mind, and encourages and strengthens them when they are there. The Redeemer's word and spirit will be as sure a guide to heaven, as if you were to hear a voice behind you saying, *this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand or to the left.*—You have many of you taken pains to render yourselves agreeable to your friends and acquaintance, and to gain respect in the world; and will ye have no regard to the good opinion of the Son of God—no concern to secure respect and affection from him? I hope you will make this inquiry very seriously and very speedily, *what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* you will then be the objects of the Redeemer's love and care, and he will shew you the way to heaven. Oh, that I could see you all going and seeking the Lord your God, and *asking the way to Zion, with your faces thitherward,* saying, *come let us join ourselves to the Lord in the bonds of an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten.* Thus you see what encouragement arises from hence for young people to ask the way to heaven.

Let me entreat you on the other hand to consider (secondly) HOW VAIN ARE ALL ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROMISING APPEARANCES, WHILE REAL PIETY IS WANTING, and the love of the world prevails in the heart.—The young man in our text was extremely polite and well bred, had a modest appearance and teachable disposition, but wanted that which gives life and ornament to every thing else, namely, real religion ; that is *the one thing needful*—and every thing without it is vain.—Here is a young gentleman who set out well, but quickly drew back; *who began in the spirit, but ended in the flesh*. God grant that it may never be the case with any of you. That it may not, let me address myself to you, my dear young friends, with all plainness and faithfulness. Many of you have enjoyed a good education in early life, or have been lately brought under good instructions, and taught *the way in which you should go*; you have been shewed what is good, and what the Lord requireth of you; good impressions have been made upon some of your minds, the spirit of God has been early

early at work there; perhaps many of you can say as the young man in our text, that you have in general been sober, chaste, honest, dutiful to parents, and have denied yourselves some of the gratifications and indulgences of life, which, though consistent with modern politeness, are by no means consistent with modesty, diligence, and prudence. Some of you have avoided those connections and dangerous diversions, which many in your rank and station indulge themselves in; you, like the young man in the text, treat others, and especially the ministers of Christ, with respect; you submit to our instructions, come to us in public, and in a more private manner, to know *what you must do to inherit eternal life?* Your conduct, at least as far as we can judge, is in most respects unblamable; all this is very well—no wonder you are the objects of our love, and that we entertain the most pleasing expectations concerning you. But if this, my young friends, if this be all, and you ask *what lack I yet*—my answer must be that of our text, *one thing thou lackest*. If you want real piety, unfeigned love to God, and a willingness

willingness to sacrifice earth for heaven, you are poor, wretched, miserable creatures; however polite, complaisant, or well bred; however wise and serious you may appear; all human accomplishments are mere ciphers, they are really of no value in themselves; but if true religion, if real piety stand before them, it is like a figure before a parcel of ciphers, which raises them to an immense value. Religion adds worth and beauty to every other accomplishment.—Let me then, my young friends, exhort you to seek this *one thing needful*, and enforce the exhortation by shewing you the misery of being without it, whatever else you may enjoy.—But this will be the subject of my next Address.

ADDRESS

## ADDRESS XVII.

### PART II.

#### A HOPEFUL YOUTH FALLING SHORT OF HEAVEN.

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MARK x. 21.

*Then Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest.*

IN my last address I have shewn you what was amiable and excellent in this youth, which led our Lord to love him, that is, to approve and take complacency in him: I have also illustrated the deficiency of this young man's character, and shewn you that the love of the world was predominant in his heart, and that he was destitute of a real principle of religion. We have seen what encouragements this narrative affords for young persons to inquire after Christ, and how vain are all accomplishments and appearances, while real piety is wanting.

Let

Let me now exhort you, my young friends, to **MAKE SURE OF THIS ONE THING NEEDFUL** —**SINCERE PIETY**; and enforce the exhortation by shewing you the misery of being without it, whatever else you enjoy. Let me (first) exhort you to **make sure of this one thing needful**; let it be your greatest concern to obtain this—and may it ever be your parents greatest concern to have you taught it. In order to this, labour to be sensible that you have sinned against God, that you have broken his commandments in thought, word, and deed; that you have indulged too many evil imaginations, and spoken too many evil words; that your sins have exposed you to the displeasure of God and the misery of hell; and that there is no other way of escaping these, but by repenting and turning to the Lord, being sorry for your sins, breaking them off, and taking heed that you offend God no more. In order to this, daily and diligently read the word of God, and examine your hearts and lives by it; and pray daily to God to enlighten your minds, forgive your sins, and lead you in the way to everlasting life. Inquire seriously

riously *what lack I yet?* What further duty am I to practise? Wherein am I most deficient? What duty does my present age and circumstances require of me? What sin am I peculiarly liable to? Is it pride, idleness, lying, evil speaking, playing and trifling on the Lord's day, neglect of Christ and his glorious gospel? What lust has the greatest power over me? What temptation do I find the strongest? What conquests do I get over it? How am I affected by *the sin that most easily besets me?*—These are inquiries which should be daily and seriously made. You are not called, like the young man in the text, *to sell all you have and give to the poor;* but you are called to that which perhaps to many is as difficult—you are called, you are obliged, if you will be saved, to forsake the cup in which you have drank to excess, the companions among whom you have rioted, that pride of dress and accomplishments in which you have indulged to imprudence and excess, the inordinate love of the world which you have cherished. These, though as dear as a right hand or a right eye,

must

must be resolutely put off. You are especially to beware that you do not, like this foolish youth in the text, prefer the world to your souls.—Our Lord represents immediately after the text the extreme hazard there is of rich men being saved; it is next to impossible, it is as difficult as *a camel to pass through the eye of a needle*—a strong proverbial expression, to shew the great hazard there is in those circumstances. There is no passage in the whole bible less believed than this, or else surely men would not be so mad upon gaining the world. Guard against the love of it, *for the love of money is the root of all evil*; it leads men to forsake Christ and to betray him. Learn then this difficult lesson, to *deny yourselves, to take up your cross and follow Christ*. If you will not do this, Christ will never receive and own you as his disciples.—Let young persons learn the vanity of the world, and not set their affections upon it as their highest good; let them be used to self-denial and mortification. But, alas! while parents are more solicitous to teach their children the art of dress and getting money, than of growing wise to salvation,

salvation, all your ministers and teachers can say will signify nothing; and their children (like this young man in the text), with all their fine accomplishments, and large fortunes and possessions, will only become a richer prey to Satan, and increase the triumphs of hell.—In a word, our text suggests, that we are to be willing to part with any thing, and every thing, for the sake of Christ and a good conscience; for he that loseth every thing he has in this world, and saveth his soul, is an unspeakable gainer.—To enforce this concern about the one thing needful, and that indifference to the world, the want of which leads so many to forsake Christ, I shall suggest

(Secondly), a few awful and weighty considerations; and I desire you, my young friends, to attend to the force of them. Consider how UNCOMFORTABLE and DANGEROUS your state will be, if real piety is wanting.

Consider how UNCOMFORTABLE your state will be; I make no question but it is so at *present*, and will be more so *bereafter*; it is so at *present*, at least very often. You have been taught the things that relate to the welfare of

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your soul, and know what the will of God is; you must be sensible to neglect it is very wrong in itself, and must give uneasiness to every considerate mind. When you hear the condition of sinners in another world described, I make no question but you are often ready to tremble; when sickness seizes you (as it often does the young and lively) and death makes its awful approach, your flesh is ready to tremble for fear of God. And is this a comfortable state? As you increase in years and knowledge, your pains and fears will probably increase; you will be often harrassed with doubts and anxieties, and your knowledge, like that of the young man in the text, will make you sad; and the agonies of conscience continually attending you, will make every circumstance and relation in life less agreeable than it would otherwise be. The pleasures of religion will be lost, whilst you are in doubt about the reality of it in your own heart. The consolations of the everlasting gospel have little effect on those who have little or no hope that they are entitled to them.

Further,

Further, while you continue almost christians, and lack this one thing, **YOU WILL HAVE NO COMFORTABLE PROSPECTS AS TO ANOTHER WORLD**—terror will be on every side, and *a fearful looking for of judgment* will spoil your relish for all the enjoyments of life.—Consider further, **HOW DANGEROUS A STATE THIS IS**; by continuing in it your hearts will grow harder and your rescue more difficult; and if you die in it, your misery will be aggravated and intolerable. By continuing in it **YOUR HEARTS WILL GROW HARDER**; by degrees you will begin to think that you have no need of repentance, that you have qualifications **enow**; when you have some accomplishments, and have done something in religion, you will be likely to grow vain and confident, and deceive yourselves: to this, you will be in danger of being led by the conduct of others also; they judge by outward appearances, and when they see a well bred and accomplished young man or woman, they admire and commend them—and this fills their souls with secret vanity, and they are ready to think that surely God loves them because men do

so. Sometimes where there are appearances of seriousness; the virtuous and the good may commend—and the young creature is often so puffed up with this, that he thinks he is good enough, that he is as godly as he needs to be, though he is still in the bonds of iniquity and the way to destruction.—Let it further be observed, that good impressions on the mind being owing to the spirit's influence, may and probably will cease, if they are neglected and not improved; for God may take his spirit away, and *give men up to their own heart's lusts*, and then their recovery becomes extremely difficult, almost impossible. Remember then, my young friends, the longer you continue destitute of real piety, the more will your heart be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin and the allurements of the world. And let me add further, if you die in this state,  
**YOUR MISERY WILL BE AGGRAVATED AND INTOLERABLE.** The time of the Son of man's coming to call us away by death is uncertain; the life of the youngest of you is but as a vapour. Suppose death comes before the great work of life is done, before *the one thing needful*

*needful* be secured, I tremble to think of the consequences; but I must tell you, and desire you seriously to consider it, the consequence will be an immediate removal from this world to a state of intolerable misery, where there is no room for hearing, reading, or inquiry—where the Redeemer will no more pity you, and your pious friends will have laid aside any such regard for you as now gives them uneasiness and concern: your misery will be aggravated by all the advantages of a religious nature, which you have enjoyed superior to most even in the christian world; your misery will be increased by all the pleasing hopes with which you have been flattering yourselves, and which you will then see to be all vain and deceitful, though you will not now believe it; all the pains and labour you have been at in learning divine things, and practising some christian virtues, will not only be lost, but aggravate your misery; your having kept some of the commandments, while you have wanted real piety, and having affronted God, and deceived yourselves by a partial obedience, will make your ruin more dreadful; the more

genteel, and modest, and polite, and complaisant you are, the greater will be your torments, when you are sentenced by the affectionate lover of souls, by the Son of God (who is not to be charmed by compliments and address), to dwell *in everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, and in company with them, who will be much greater tormentors to you than they could be to clownish and savage spirits.—In short, a person who begins well in religion, but draws back—a person that is almost, but not altogether, a real christian, is like a man who comes back a few steps from a terrible pit, to plunge more forcibly and sink more deeply into it.—I beseech you therefore out of love to your souls, my dear young friends, that you do not *say peace, peace to yourselves, when there is no peace*, and think you are going to heaven, when perhaps you are in the broad way to destruction.

I would fain awaken you to a holy solicitude—Jesus, the Son of God, beholds and pities you; we, your friends and teachers, most sincerely pity you, and tremble to think

think of the misery that is before you—and would fain rouse you from your slumbers, and bring you in good earnest to make that inquiry, *what shall I do to inherit eternal life.* And may the spirit of God strike home with these plain admonitions, that you may walk in the ways of wisdom even to the end, and at length *inherit that crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

Once more, if Christ beheld this young man, and loved him for his amiable qualities, though he knew his heart was not right with him, **HOW MUCH MORE WILL HE LOVE THOSE AMIABLE YOUTHS, WHO ARE REALLY PIOUS AND TRULY SINCERE.**—My young friends, if there are any of you whose hearts are right with God, and who are steadfast in his covenant, it delights my heart to think how the blessed Jesus views your rising years, and steadfast faith, and growing zeal; he beholds your improving knowledge, and virtues, and graces, and is always at your right hand to strengthen and defend you; he sees you renouncing this beloved lust and that sinful companion, for his name sake—and a divine <sup>to shew in this</sup> ~~complacency~~ <sup>complacency</sup> ~~and~~

complacency fills his benevolent breast. Heaven triumphs in every victory you gain over temptation, and waits to crown your heroic virtues in the realms of bliss. The day is coming when Christ will express his approbation before the assembled world of angels and men ; and God himself *will rejoice over you with joy, will rest in his love, and joy over you with singing.*—In the mean time may you be careful to cultivate those amiable dispositions, and that lovely carriage, which made even this young man so pleasing to Christ. You have chosen the better part, you call heaven your home and God your portion, and love him above all things below or above : it is well, and methinks I would not have any blot cast on so many excellencies. Let me therefore entreat you to cultivate that sweet, amiable, agreeable temper and carriage, which so much recommended this young man—that the wisest and best of men and ministers may love your company and rejoice in your acquaintance. Always maintain an humble, obliging behaviour—do not neglect the forms of civility and respect which you owe to your superiors, either in words or actions.

actions. Youth will add a comeliness to such a behaviour, and such a behaviour will cast a lustre on your piety; and both will enable you to adorn the doctrine of God and your Saviour in all things. Amen.

## HYMN.

MUST all the charms of nature then  
So hopeless to salvation prove?  
Can hell demand, can heav'n condemn  
The man whom Jesus deigns to love?

The man who sought the ways of truth,  
Paid friends and neighbours all their due,  
(A modest, sober, lovely youth)  
And thought he wanted nothing new:

But mark the change—thus spake the Lord,  
Come part with earth for heav'n to-day;  
The youth, astonish'd at the word,  
In silent sadness went his way.

Poor virtues, that he boasted so—  
This test unable to endure,  
Let Christ, and grace, and glory go,  
To make his land and money sure.

Ah, foolish choice of treasures here!  
Ah, fatal love of tempting gold!  
Must this base world be bought so dear,  
And life and heav'n so cheaply sold?

In vain the charms of nature shine,  
If this vile passion governs me:  
Transform my soul, O love divine!  
And make me part with all for thee.

## ADDRESS

## ADDRESS XVIII.

### THE ADVANTAGE OF EARLY AFFLICTIONS.

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LAMENTATIONS iii. 27.

*It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in  
his youth.*

THIS is a maxim that contradicts the general opinion of mankind, and is ill suited to the relish of the present age in particular; but it is nevertheless true, and a maxim of the greatest importance: and on this account, my young friends, it deserves your peculiar attention. In these words the prophet Jeremiah plainly refers to afflictions, and these he describes under the image of bearing a yoke, such as is laid upon beasts, to denote something disagreeable and painful; it is a restraint put upon a man, that he cannot have what he will, and do what he pleases. He says *it is good to bear* this—not pleasant, but

but profitable; it is a man's duty and advantage to bear it, and particularly so in the days of his youth. And to illustrate this remark, and prove the truth of it, shall be the busines of my present addres.—Hearken, my beloved brethren, and especially those of you who are young, to this strange remark (this seeming paradox) of the Prophet, that *it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth*; or in other words, that early afflictions and restraints are of great advantage to youth: and this will plainly appear if we attentively consider the following particulars.

For instance (first), THEY LEAD TO RETIREMENT, AND SO PROMOTE SERIOUSNESS AND CONSIDERATION;—this is mentioned in the following verse, *he fitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he bath borne it upon him*. God hath made us social creatures; but we often carry this inclination to excess. Most persons think it an intolerable burden to be any considerable time alone; and though they love themselves out of measure, yet they cannot endure their own conversation—they had rather be hearing and discoursing of the most trifling

trifling things, than be sitting alone and holding their peace: this love of company is peculiarly predominant in youth, and exposes them to a great many snares; it dissipates their thoughts, and they seldom hear attentively, read seriously, or think closely. Now afflictions are adapted to correct this unhappy taste; when sickness confines them at home, or other afflictions destroy their relish for such society, then they begin to think soberly, to love retirement, to converse with themselves, and commune with their own hearts. Retirement and solitude collect the scattered thoughts, fix the attention of the mind to important and interesting subjects, strengthen the faculties of the soul, and lead it to know itself—the most useful, and yet the most neglected, branch of knowledge. This is one advantage of early afflictions.

And (secondly) THEY TEND TO PROMOTE A DEVOUT, PENITENT, AND HUMBLE SPIRIT.— Youth is generally high spirited, proud, and unruly. God is sometimes pleased to bring them under the yoke, to curb this unhappy disposition. When every thing is gay without,

out and easy within, they are ready to forget God, and all the advice of their parents and friends have little effect; nay, sometimes when they are full, they deny God, and say *who is the Lord*, and cast off fear, and restrain prayer before him; but when their comforts are gone, and the streams of pleasure and health are cut off, they begin to inquire after the fountain: they *cry to God in their trouble*—afflictions bring them to their knees; and as it is expressed (*Hosea v. 15.*), *in their afflictions they seek him early*, with earnestness and importunity. When they have lost some of their mercies, they begin to know the value of them, and to be thankful for those that remain; whereas before they rendered not unto the Lord according to the benefits received.

Farther, they tend to promote a **PENITENT SPIRIT**.—*Foolishness*, says Solomon, *is bound up in the heart of a child, and the rod of correction must drive it out*. But when the advice and correction of parents will not do this, God takes up his rod and corrects his disobedient children; then their conscience convinces them of sin; when *God writes bitter*

*things against them, then they are made to possess the iniquity of their youth.* What they before called levities or pardonable follies, begin to appear evil and bitter things; when God finds gentle methods are not sufficient to bring them to repentance, if they break the cords of a man and the bands of love, he brings them under the yoke, visits them with pain and sickness, disappoints their pleasing schemes, and thus by his grace, leads them *to search and try their ways, and turn again unto the Lord;* and to say as Ephraim of old (*Jer. xxxi. 18*), *after that I was afflicted, I was ashamed, yea, even confounded.* As a consequence of this, early afflictions tend to promote an HUMBLE SPIRIT: pride is a sin that easily besets young people, and is the source of innumerable evils—I had almost said of every other evil—and nothing will so effectually subdue it as afflictions; they convince men of their ignorance, weakness, and guilt, of the folly of placing confidence in riches, or beauty, or strength, or any outward excellency, and dispose them to walk humbly with God, to submit to divine and human teaching,

teaching, and comply with that method of salvation which the gospel has appointed; thus (*Job xxxiii. 16, 17.*) *God openeth the ear and sealeth their instruction, that he may bide pride from man.*—A third advantage of early afflictions, is, that **THEY TEND TO WEAN THE HEART FROM THE PLEASURES OF THE WORLD:** pleasure is the idol of youth, it suits their natural temper; custom and ill education lead them to it; and their minds being pliable and their tempers easy, they are readily seduced into those paths where folly and mirth usurp the place of wisdom and gravity: to remedy this fatal mischief God is pleased to visit young persons with afflictions, to imbitter those things to them and wean their hearts from them. When the body is diseased or the spirit is wounded, the relish for pleasure abates; what before was their business and joy, becomes a pain; and if at any time by their foolish acquaintance they are led to scenes of amusement and parties of pleasure, *even in laughter the heart is sorrowful*—and they are soon weary of that, in which before they trifled away the day and consumed the night;

they now see how little these things can do to support the mind—songs to a heavy heart are all discord; they find sports and pastimes will not heal body or soul, they find the want of something more solid and substantial, and *say of laughter it is mad, and of mirth what doeth it.* And this disrelish for pleasure and gaiety, may through the divine blessing (and I believe frequently does) lead young persons to see its emptiness and danger, and with the pious Psalmist to turn unto the Lord, and say (*Psalm cxix. 123.*), *now Lord what wait I for, my hope is in thee, mine eyes fail for thy salvation, when wilt thou comfort me.*

Again (in the fourth place), early afflictions TEND TO MAKE THEIR HEARTS FRIENDLY, TENDER, AND COMPASSIONATE.—Persons without afflictions, like spoiled children, are too often humoursome, haughty, and tyranical: and to allude to the words of Amos, (vi. 6.) *they that live in ease and luxury, and lie upon beds of ivory, and dance to the sound of the viol, are seldom grieved at the afflictions of Joseph;* but when the hand of God is upon themselves, they feel it, they know what afflictions

afflictions mean, and are able and disposed to sympathize with others, and to *weep with those that weep*. Besides, afflictions in general soften the heart and make it tender, dispose it to that compassion which is the glory of our nature, that leads us to avoid every thing that may pain or grieve others, or add to the weight of their sorrow; and to do every thing that lies in our power by kind words and friendly offices, to comfort, assist, and relieve them. Now it is of great advantage to any, and especially to young people, to have these benevolent and truly christian dispositions cherished in their minds—and early afflictions tend to produce and cherish them; and finally, they tend to fit them for the further difficulties and sufferings of life. This life is a school of education for a better, and it is fit the discipline of God's school should begin early. God sees that some souls will never get to heaven without great afflictions; he therefore *chastens them with his rebukes*, dis- appoints them in their schemes, *takes away the desire of their eyes with a stroke*, and ob- scures all their pleasing prospects; and it is

good for them to meet with such trials in their youth, because afflictions then generally do most good; ill habits are more easily cured then, before custom and length of time have confirmed them; thus they are early set upon serious thought and reflection, religious principles and dispositions are brought into early exercise, and ripen and improve with growing years; the mind thus becomes habituated to self-denial, contentment, patience, and meekness—virtues so necessary in this world to perfect our graces and fit us for heaven. Such a person will not raise high expectations in life, but rather look for disappointments and sorrows; will be patient in labour, active in service, resigned in a state of suffering, and contentedly wait for the expected reward in another world. There is another thought deserves to be mentioned in this connection, and that is, being accustomed to the yoke will make it less galling, and less painful; custom, we know, makes almost every thing tolerable; and being trained up in the school of affliction, they will be better able to bear with what further discipline may be before them,

them, better support under the difficulties and sorrows of riper years, the infirmities of age and the agonies of death itself.—Now I beseech you to consider these things, my young friends, and then say, *is it not good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.*

And does not this, in the first place, as an improvement of the subject, VINDICATE THE WISDOM AND THE KINDNESS OF GOD IN EARLY AFFLICTIONS.—It is hard to persuade any, and especially young people, that it is good for them to be afflicted; they form wrong estimates of happiness, set out with chimerical notions, and conclude that no state is so desirable as constant health, prosperity, ease, and pleasure; but such a condition is rather to be feared as evil than desired as good. They do not expect afflictions, and they think they will not fall to their share; they hope their youth will be quite gay and cheerful, that the morning will be bright, and the day serene and cloudless; they expect indeed a few storms in the evening, and to suffer with the rest of the world in old age, and in those evil days in which men say *I have*

*bare no pleasure in them*; they think it hard if it should be the reverse of this. It is happy for you, young friends, that God thinks otherwise; he loves you and seeks your good, and therefore he chastens you. God is not like foolish earthly parents, who the fonder they are of their children, the more they indulge their appetites, humours, and inclinations, and the more carefully they keep them from every thing that would mortify, disappoint, or grieve them; that is, in other words, the fonder they are of them, the more they take the way to ruin them. But God is infinitely wise, as well as perfectly good; and he will always take that method which is best for your souls and your eternal interests. The Prophet observes just after the text, that *God does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*—it is all for our profit; and I hope you see by what has been said, that the means are well fitted to bring about the end. And there are many young people who have said (and I hope some of you can by experience say), *before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep thy word.* It fully shews

shews the wisdom and goodness of God in our afflictions ; that as the Apostle observes (*Heb. xii. 11.*), *though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

And hence it plainly follows, that **IT IS THE WISDOM OF YOUTH TO BEAR THE YOKE PATIENTLY AND CHEERFULLY,** to submit to afflictions, and endeavour to gain good by them. Solomon observes, *that he who spareth the rod, spoileth the child ;* and children of any sense and ingenuity will esteem their parents and teachers for the restraint they lay them under, and the methods they take to promote their subjection and obedience : this I hope you think reasonable and proper ; and should you not then much rather *be in subjection to the Father of your spirits ?* An heathen philosopher will tell you, that there cannot be a more unhappy person in the world, than he who has never experienced adversity ; and christianity does in effect say the same thing. What room then is there for complaining, murmuring, and fretting under

under the hand of God, *like a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke?* Bow yourselves therefore in humble subjection to the restraints which a kind Providence lays upon your inclinations, and cheerfully submit to that under which so many groan and lament. In the day of adversity consider what lessons the voice of God teaches, and what advantage he intends you should reap; remember that to despise the chastening of the Lord, and to hate reproof, is brutish; and to faint in the day of adversity is unchristian; but the worst evil of all, is to fret and quarrel with a wise and righteous Providence, and refuse to return unto God, and obey his commands; and there is an awful threatening against such persons, that may justly alarm us (*Prov. xxix. 1.*), *be that being often reproved, bardeneth his neck, that is, frets under the yoke, like an untractable ox, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* Be it your care then, my brethren and companions in the tribulation of Jesus Christ, in patience to possess your souls, and by earnest prayer draw down divine assistance to strengthen your hearts and improve

improve your graces, and then you will find that *his yoke is easy and his burden is light*. And that as it follows just after the text, though *he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies*. To conclude, whatever sense may dictate, or the giddy and unthinking world suggest, *blessed is the man that God chasteneth and teacheth out of his law; blessed is the man that endureth affliction, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*.

## HYMN.

GOD of my life! how good, how wise  
Thy judgments on my soul have been;  
They were but mercies in disguise—  
The painful remedy of sin.

Thy goodness, ever bent to save,  
Has oft my airy schemes o'erthrown;  
My will thou would'st not let me have,  
With blushing thankfulness I own.

Thou hast not left me to my will,  
But forc'd me from my sins to part;  
Thy love forbad my rest below,  
And tore each idol from my heart.

No more will I the loss lament,  
Or murmur at thy friendly rod;  
Thrice happy loss, which makes me see  
My happiness is all in God.

## ADDRESS

## ADDRESS XIX.

### THE CHARACTER OF ABIJAH RECOMMENDED TO YOUTH.

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I KINGS xiv. 13.

*And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.*

A Vigorous and fruitful branch springing up out of a bad stock, is a curiosity in the world of nature; a good child springing up in a corrupt and wicked family, is as great a curiosity in the moral world.—Abijah was an instance of this kind;—he fell sick, Jeroboam sent his wife in disguise to consult the Prophet about him; he was ordered to send him word, that for his wickedness, his whole family should be murdered and lie unburied, and that

that this child should be dead before the messenger should get home. And then it follows in the text, *and all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.*—The account of this hopeful son I am now to consider; and it will afford some important instructions to all, and especially to you, my dear young friends, whom I am now principally to address.

And here you may remark, in the first place, that PIETY IS THE MOST ACCEPTABLE THING IN GOD'S ESTEEM.—Abijah was eldest son of Jeroboam, and heir apparent to the crown of Israel; he had no doubt many amiable qualities, but that for which he is celebrated in the text, is, that *there was some good thing in him toward the Lord God of Israel;* that is, he was a pious youth, a worshipper of Jehovah the God of Israel, and probably intended, if he ever came to the crown, to take away the calves which his father had set up, and suffer his subjects to go to Jerusalem to worship. We see then

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what is of most value in God's esteem; and that what is truly good in any person is only that which is good towards God. External accomplishments, natural or acquired endowments, an amiable disposition and behaviour towards men, are good and commendable; but wisdom, that is, the fear, love, and service of God, is the principal thing; for he is the greatest and best of beings, our Creator, Benefactor, and Lord; and therefore if he be forgotten, and his worship and service neglected, the main, the leading branch of goodness is wanting—and they who are chargeable with this can never be the objects of his favour.

We may remark, in the second place, that **GOD OBSERVES AND IS PLEASED WITH SMALL DEGREES OF PIETY**:—if there be but *some good thing* in any person *toward the Lord God*, he is pleased with it, and in the case of Abijah, he directed his Prophet to express his satisfaction in it. Though much could not be found, nor even expected, in one so young as Abijah seems to have been, yet God sees when *there is only some good thing*; he is pleased with good beginnings, with the buddings of

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true piety, with hopeful inclinations towards God, with the pains that young persons take in thinking of him, and of what they hear concerning him; he is pleased with serious, though broken, addresses to him, and with sincere desires to know more of him, and to love that which is good; he takes delight to see any using the proper means to improve in the best things, and is disposed to make favourable allowances for their imperfections; he loves and commends what is good in them, as in the case before us: thus when he blamed Jehoshaphat for an alliance with the ungodly, he adds (*Chron. xix. 3.*), *nevertheless, there are good things found in thee.*

We remark further (thirdly), that GOD IS PECULIARLY PLEASED WITH THE PIETY OF YOUNG PERSONS, especially those who have laboured under great disadvantages. We are not told the precise age of Abijah, but it is plain he was young, and his being called the child seems to intimate that he was very young; and yet of him God by his Prophet speaks so very honourably. Piety is peculiarly lovely in youth, because they have so many

D d 2      temptations.

temptations at their age to lead them to neglect it; their passions are warm, their fondness for sensual pleasures eager, their minds are thoughtless and dissipated, and they have but very imperfect ideas of their own spirits, and much more of God *the Father of spirits*. Piety in youth is so uncommon, that in those in whom it is found it is peculiarly amiable and pleasing to God; most youths are void of understanding, walking in the way of their heart and in the sight of their eyes, never reflecting on God their Maker, but living *without him in the world*; and therefore when any distinguish themselves by their devout regards to him, he views them with special approbation, particularly when this is the case with those who have laboured under great disadvantages.— Abijah had a very wicked father, who had *done evil above all that were before him*, and had particularly *cast God and his worship behind his back* (1 Kings xiv. 9.)—and no doubt he would endeavour to corrupt his son also; but this young man kept close to the pure religion of Israel, and was the only person

person in the family that testified his dislike to the golden calves. And this is the case, I hope, with some few now; they have descended from parents, who seem to have no sense of God at all, have entirely neglected their education, and been *their counsellors to do wickedly*, who have set them an ill example, and taught them to cast off fear, to live without prayer, and profane the sabbath: a pious youth in such a family is a kind of miracle of divine grace; it shews such a strength of religious principles, such a steadiness and firmness of soul as is pleasing to all good men, and which the righteous God beholds with peculiar delight; though I should rather say, it shews his free and surprising grace and mercy, that he will take any out of the territories of Satan, out of profane and irreligious families, to bestow the influences of his spirit upon them, and make them the objects of his love.

Once more, in the fourth place, GOD AND MAN WILL PUT HONOUR ON SUCH PIOUS YOUTHS—the text expresseth both, in the case of Abijah; God promised it as a favour,

that he should *come to his grave*, that he alone of all the family should be buried, the rest should be murdered, and their bodies eaten by the dogs or the birds (ver. 11.) and no doubt it was a favour to Abijah to die so young; God probably foresaw that if he had lived he would have been corrupted and ruined, and therefore mercifully took him away from the evil to come, and his name is *bad in everlasting remembrance*. And by this method he sometimes shews his favour to pious youths still; at other times he preserves their lives amidst threatening dangers, and spares and furnishes them for eminent honour and usefulness in life, gives them more grace and comfort, makes them great and long blessings to the world and church, and thus prepares them for distinguished glory in his heavenly kingdom. Such pious youths will be esteemed and loved of men too.—The Prophet told Jeroboam's wife, in the text, that *all Israel should mourn for her son, and bury him*; they had great expectations from this hopeful prince—those that were bad amongst them reverenced his character, and the good loved

loved him and lamented him as a great and public loss, foreseeing those approaching calamities which his wisdom and piety might have prevented. So we are told (ver. 18.) that *all Israel mourned for him*; and thus pious young persons, especially those in irreligious families will be esteemed and respected; they will grow in favour both with God and man, they will be secretly reverenced even by those that hate their piety and attempt to corrupt them, and will be esteemed worthy of double honour by their superiors in age and righteousness: thus *will they find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and men*.

And from hence you clearly see **WHAT SHOULD BE THE CHIEF DESIRE AND AMBITION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH**; namely, to be pious, to have good things in them towards the Lord God of Israel, the God of their fathers, to whom they were early devoted, and who has hitherto been their help.—There are many young people who are well behaved, genteel, polite, good natured, and generally esteemed; and yet they shew by many circumstances in their lives, that *they have no fear of God before their eyes*,

eyes, that they are utter strangers to real piety. See then, my young friends, that there is in you a real principle of piety, that you fear God from your youth, labour and pray that you may *be renewed in the spirit of your mind, after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness*; and as this is the will of God, that you believe in the name of his Son whom he hath sent, labour to maintain believing regards to him as your teacher and Saviour, your instructor and guardian, and ask his spirit to enlighten and sanctify your hearts—this is the main thing. Knowledge, good nature, politeness, civility, modesty, and other accomplishments of youth, are good things; but without *some good thing towards God*, you are wretched and miserable, like a painted sepulchre, beautiful without, but within full of corruption.—Rest satisfied with nothing short of a principle of real religion, the fear and love of God; men may esteem you for the former, but God will love you for the latter only. Joseph, Solomon, Josias, Jabel, Obadiah, and especially our Lord Jesus Christ, were all renowned for their early piety, and this endeared them to the

the Most High. Without this you may be a lovely youth, but *you will perish in your sins; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*—If there be, indeed, a principle of piety within, let it shew itself, and **BE STRENGTHENED BY THE PROPER MEANS OF IMPROVEMENT**, particularly by serious thought and reflection, by thinking on your ways, and pondering the paths of your feet, making the thoughts of God familiar to your minds, and seeing and observing his hand and providence in every thing. If there be *some good thing in you towards God*, strengthen it by reading and studying the scriptures; and *cleanse your way* more perfectly by *taking heed thereto according to his word.* The more you know of God's word, the better will you be armed against temptations; daily fervent prayer to God will strengthen good principles in your heart, make you watchful against temptation, and engage the help of his spirit to strengthen good beginnings. Without prayer there is not, nor can be, any *good thing in you towards God*; but you want the first evidence of true religion. The religious observation of the sabbath,

sabbath, and a regular attendance upon ordinances, are the supports of piety; and when young people, or indeed any others, trifle away the sabbath, and prefer busines, amusements, unnecessary journeys, and avocations to the house and ordinances of God, it shews an entire want of real religion.—Let me entreat you to avoid every thing that would weaken the pious principle which is, I hope, in many of your hearts; especially the company of those who make light of ordinances and devotion, or are only men of this world: watch with the utmost care against *the sin that easily besets you*, and be ambitious that *the good thing that is in you towards the Lord God* may grow and increase; buds and blossoms are pleasing and promising, but they are not fruit, they only give hopes of fruit; labour to improve in knowledge and goodness, and let it not be as the morning cloud or as the early dew, that soon passeth away; disappoint not, I beseech you, the pleasing hopes of parents, ministers, and friends, but look to yourselves that *you lose not the things that you have wrought*.—A wicked child in a good family,

family, and with a religious education, is a monster, as hateful to God and man, as a good child out of a wicked family is lovely and pleasing to both. To quicken you to diligence, watchfulness, and prayer, consider what the text suggests, **THAT YOU MAY SOON DIE**: Abijah, the prince royal of Israel, died young; and neither his rank, respect, nor piety, could secure him. You are equally mortal; if you die young or old, if there be no *good thing in you towards God*, how many other good things soever you may have, you are lost and undone for ever; but true piety will insure you everlasting felicity. We do not desire that God should take you away in the morning of your days, but rather desire and hope that you may live and requite your parents and ministers, and be the support of religion in the next generation: but allow us to say, we had ten thousand times rather you should die young, like Abijah, under the favour of heaven, than live to lose every good thing, and be corrupted and ruined for time and eternity.

Permit

Permit me to add, that THIS SUBJECT IS AN ENCOURAGEMETT TO YOUNG PERSONS WHO LABOUR UNDER GREAT DISADVANTAGES.—

Some of you perhaps were born in families where there is no religion, or very little, and that little mixed with many irregularities and superstitions: there are many young persons who have had no education, who were hardly taught to read; but if you are willing to learn, and desirous to be instructed in the things of God, and sincerely aim to serve him, that is a good thing —and be not discouraged, for *it is accepted, according to what a man bath.* The desire of a man is reckoned his kindness by all considerate persons, and surely God is more gracious than man: though your capacities are weak and your knowledge small, if you have humble and honest hearts, if you act from a regard to the all-seeing God, and with a desire to serve and honour him, he will graciously accept you; he hears your broken, feeble prayers, he knows your secret desires, though through fear or modesty you cannot express them. Be not discouraged then, for God will mercifully regard the kindness of

your

your youth, and accept the willingness of your spirits, and you will also be respected by wise and good men: only see that you be modest and humble, and pretend to no more knowledge and goodness than you have; for *before honour is humility, and God giveth grace to the humble.*—BE THANKFUL TO THOSE MASTERS, FRIENDS, OR MINISTERS, WHO HAVE HAD PITY ON YOU WHEN IGNORANT AND OUT OF THE WAY; who have instructed you, exhorted you, borne with your folly and perverseness, and taken so much pains to bring you to *the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.* Consider how many kind friends have still their eye upon you, and are anxiously watching your conduct, whether you behave well in your stations, keep the sabbath holy, seriously attend on divine ordinances, and are solicitous to improve your minds and grow in knowledge and grace. Above all, consider the eye of God is upon you, and he sees how you act and how you think every day and in every place. Be concerned above all things to approve yourselves in his sight, *whose favour*

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322 CHARACTER OF ABIJAH RECOMMENDED.

*is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life.* To his love and care I most affectionately commend you; and also to the grace and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it was said, *a bruised reed shall be not break, nor quench the smoaking flax, till he bring forth judgment unto victory.* Amen.

*H Y M N.*

WITH joy we meditate the grace  
Of our High-Priest above;

His heart is made of tenderness,  
His bowels melt with love:

He'll never quench the smoaking flax,  
But raise it to a flame;  
The bruised reed he never breaks,  
Nor scorns the meanest name.

Then let our humble faith address  
His mercy and his power;  
We shall obtain deliv'ring grace  
In the distressing hour.

*ADDRESS*

ADDRESS XX.

THE CHARACTER OF OBADIAH RECOMMENDED TO YOUTH.

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I KINGS xviii. 12.

*But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.*

THIS was the declaration of Obadiah to the prophet Elijah, when he met him in the way, and the Prophet orders him to go and tell Ahab that he was coming to him ; Obadiah knowing the hatred of Ahab to the Prophet, was afraid that delivering this message, without bringing the Prophet with him, would expose him to Ahab's resentment ; and therefore he hoped that the Prophet would take care to preserve his life, and not expose him to such manifest hazard. And in the text he hints at one reason for this, *but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.* Let me recommend to you, my young friends, the amiable character

of the holy man who speaks in our text, and lay before you some motives to cultivate and pursue that piety for which he was so remarkable. It will be evident when you read at home the interesting story, of which these words are a part, that though Obadiah says this of himself, yet it is not spoken out of pride or ostentation ; it was in these circumstances a necessary vindication of himself as a worshipper of the true God, though he was a servant of a wicked prince, and an appeal to the equity and kindness of the Prophet: he seems determined to go if the Prophet insisted upon it ; but hopes he would be mindful of the danger that would attend it, and not sacrifice his life, by concealing himself any longer from the king. *Obadiah feared the Lord*; he had that inward reverence for him which naturally arose from the firm persuasion of his being and providence, a constant sense of his personal obligations to him, and a conviction that he was infinitely powerful, wise, and just; and this inward reverence had produced in him a constant desire, concern, and endeavour in every thing he did to please him,

him, and to approve himself in the sight of an heart-searching God. Thus it is said (ver. 3.) that he *feared the Lord greatly*; he was not only good, but eminently good; he was one of those *seven thousand men who never bowed their knee to Baal*; he worshipped Jehovah and none but him, and he shewed his reverence for God by his great esteem and concern for his prophets; he loved the servant, for the master's sake; he was an acquaintance of the prophet Elijah; they knew one another at the first meeting; he treated Elijah with the greatest respect, fell on his face, addressed him as his Lord, and called himself his servant, as in the text; he not only treated the Lord's prophets respectfully, but shewed them substantial kindness—for when Jezebel, Ahab's queen, a wicked idolatress, killed the prophets of the Lord, this Obadiah secured a *bundred* of them in two caves, *fifty in a cave*, and fed them there during all the famine. Thus he shewed his fear and love of God, by his regard and kindness to his Prophets and servants. And it is further to be remarked, that *he feared the Lord from his youth*, even

from his childhood, as the original word is; he had been early acquainted with the God of Israel, the nature of his worship, and the precepts which he enjoined; he *remembered* his *Creator in the days of his youth*, took care to cherish and strengthen the good impressions that had been made on his heart; he grew up under the influence of religious principles, and the habits of piety were confirmed beyond the power of any temptation to remove. Happy Obadiah! who was thus religious from his youth, and that at a time when there was a great corruption of manners. We read in the *1 Kings xxii. 25.* that *there was none like unto Ahab, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord*: Jezebel his queen stirred him up to all manner of wickedness and idolatry; she had slain all the Lord's prophets she could meet with; and there were four hundred prophets of the groves, or the priests of idols, who lived at court, and were her domestic chaplains. It was surprising that there should be any who feared God, in so degenerate a nation and so debauched a court. These circumstances prove that Obadiah's

Obadiah's virtue was great, and his character extraordinary, especially when we recollect that he was a person of considerable rank and fortune; he was governor of Ahab's house (an office similar to our lord steward of the King's household), a post of the highest dignity: and his feeding a hundred of the Lord's prophets during the famine, shews that he must be a person of considerable fortune. Yet amidst all the temptations of a court, of high office, and great wealth, he maintained his piety and feared God, while he served his king. This was the character of Obadiah; and these are some circumstances that rendered that character peculiarly excellent and lovely.

Let us all cultivate this fear of God, and labour, like this good man, to fear him greatly: THE BLESSED GOD IS EVERY WAY WORTHY YOUR HIGHEST VENERATION.— When we meditate on the divine perfections, the power, wisdom, justice, faithfulness, and goodness of God, as displayed in the works of nature, and illustrated in the sacred volume, we most clearly see that God is great, and greatly to be feared; he is the Creator and

governor

governor of men and angels, whose eye, with one comprehensive view, surveys every creature that his hand hath made, and whose unceasing goodness and care supplies all their wants; he is worthy of our highest veneration, as *the only wise God*, whose understanding is infinite: we should fear him whose power is unlimited, who can save or can destroy. We are commanded to *fear the Lord and his goodness*; the display of his mercy and grace in Christ justly claims the homage and reverence of our minds: *with God there is forgiveness, that he may be feared*, not that his mercy may be abused, presumptuously relied on, and his grace turned into licentiousness; but that he may be reverenced and served.

Consider, further, that YOUR PRESENT PEACE AND COMFORT DEPEND UPON CULTIVATING THIS DISPOSITION; it is not only necessary to secure his *favour and loving kindness, which is better than life*; but it will in its own nature produce peace, it will dispose the mind to be calm and easy under events, and to be contented and thankful whatever befalls it; it leads on to eminent piety and goodness, and this

this brings present peace and satisfaction, too exquisite to be expressed, too desirable to be parted with for any consideration. How great then must the peace and joy of a religious man be, when he lays aside every incumbrance, gets beyond the reach of every temptation, and his soul is made perfect in holiness and love.

These arguments, which I have now hinted at, should engage you, my young friends, *to fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man*, his duty and interest; but my chief design is to mention **SOME REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD BE PECULIARLY SOLICITOUS TO REMEMBER AND FEAR YOUR CREATOR IN THE DAYS OF YOUR YOUTH.** And here I entreat you to consider (first), that IT WILL BE YOUR BEST SECURITY AGAINST THE SNARES AND CORRUPTIONS OF THE WORLD; it secured Obadiah's virtue amidst all the temptations of Ahab's wicked court. Your lot is cast in a degenerate day, when iniquity abounds, and a contempt of God and religion grows bold; examples of real piety are scarce; and there are few even of these that are good, who

who will be so much your friends as to give you a word of advice, a hint of direction or encouragement. You are in no danger of idolatry, as Obadiah was; but you are in danger of making the world your idol, of loving pleasure more than God. Religion is so unfashionable, and the servants of the devil are so diligent in endeavouring to corrupt and destroy young minds, that you very much want some principle that will bear you above all this; especially when it is considered that the natural warmth of the passions in young minds, their openness and easiness of temper, and want of experience in the crafts of men, and the wiles of the wicked one, make them an easy prey to men of corrupt minds, and lead them to vicious practices.—Now says Solomon (*Prov. xvi. 6.*) *by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil*; this principle working strongly in your heart, will cure you of an inordinate love of pleasures and diversions; it will continually present to you nobler objects to pursue, superior pleasures to relish, it will lead you to communion with God, to study his holy word, to converse on divine subjects

subjects with your christian friends, instead of idling away your time in gaming, in foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, and are signs of a light, frothy mind ; you will be afraid to sit down with vain persons, and be *a companion of fools*, because you will be sensible, continually sensible, that God's eyes are always upon you : though your parents, masters, and other persons for whom you may have a reverence, do not see you, you will remember he does, and be ashamed to do an ill thing. This fear of God will prevent that fear of man which brings a snare, and leads such multitudes of unthinking youths to sell the truth, make *shipwreck of a good conscience*, and lose the favour of God.

Consider further (secondly), **WHAT A SATISFACTION AND JOY IT WILL BE TO YOUR PARENTS AND FRIENDS, IF THEY PERCEIVE YOU FEARING THE LORD FROM YOUR YOUTH:** it is a duty you owe to God and them, to do all you can to make their care easy and light, and render them some agreeable return for all the pains they have taken about you, and all the tenderness and love with which they have followed

followed you ; they have no greater joy than to see *that you walk in the truth* ; it will afford them satisfaction in life, and make them more willing to depart, and quit the world with greater joy, when they leave behind such descendants as are fearing God and adorning and supporting religion. By this means you will give joy to all that love Christ and his cause.

And (thirdly) THIS WILL MAKE YOU USEFUL AND HONOURABLE IN THE STATIONS IN WHICH PROVIDENCE MAY FIX YOU.—I hinted before, it was Obadiah's skill and fidelity that secured his place in Ahab's court, though he did not join in his worship. If you really fear God it will make you solicitous to know what is your duty in every circumstance ; it will make you very careful to abound in the exercise of social duty, to be good relatively, and diligent in whatever business is committed to your management. These are the best servants to men who are the faithful servants of the God of heaven ; they discharge their duty, not with eye service, merely when their masters and ministers eyes are upon them,

as

as those who are only concerned to please men, but they do it with singleness or uprightness of heart, as to the Lord—sensible that they have a master in heaven, who always sees them, and *will render to every man according to his works.* It will be the way to prosperity when you enter upon the world, as it will make you sober, chaste, honest, and diligent; you will be sure to *find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.* A remembrance that God is always present, and that you are accountable to him for all you do, say, and even think, will make you blessings to those families where providence shall fix your abode, and blessings to the church and world; more especially when you are fixed in a family of your own.

And thus (fourthly), **YOU WILL COME TO FEAR THE LORD GREATLY.**—Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth, and therefore *he feared him greatly.*—(Compare the text and ver. 3.)—When men do not begin to fear God till the middle or close of life, it is not likely they should make any considerable improvement; it requires so much time and pains to remove the rubbish and lay the foundation,

F f that

that the superstructure cannot be expected to rise high; so much time to rectify bad habits, to divert the thoughts that have so long run in another channel, especially when the faculties begin to fail, and do not so readily perceive and retain important truths and arguments; but those that fear the Lord from their youth, will arrive at eminent attainments in religion; it will be so in the nature of things—custom is a second nature—when you have been long used to the practice of religion, it will become natural; you will contract an excellent habit, be in less danger of the temptations of the present evil world; like Obadiah, you will maintain your integrity amidst the greatest prosperity, and all the solicitations and scorn of a vicious and corrupt age; you will enjoy much more of the pleasures and delights of religion than others do; you will need less of the painful work of repentance, mortification, and self-denial; you will continually live under the smiles of heaven, with a peaceful conscience and joy unspeakable, and all your prospects, as to another world, will be clear and delightful. You may expect peculiar degrees of knowledge, holiness, and peace, from

from the spirit of God. *What man is he that feareth the Lord, him shall he teach in his way.* You will be great in the sight of God, eminently useful in your family and in the church of God; you will shine as lights in the world, bring much glory to God by your bright example, and christian endeavours to promote his fear in others; and the mind having been long trained up in the exercises of religion, you will die with peculiar joy and triumph, your name will be precious to survivors, and distinguished glory will be conferred upon you in a better world.— After such a representation as this, do not your hearts, my young friends, glow with ardent zeal and resolution, that whatever others do you will serve the Lord? that though there be *no fear of God before their eyes*, you will always reverence him, and *delight yourselves greatly in the Lord?*

In hopes that this is the case with many of you, I will conclude with adding one consideration more, to urge your fear of God, and that immediately, which is this: (fifthly) **THOUGH YOU ARE YOUNG, THERE IS BUT A STEP BETWEEN YOU AND DEATH;**

that is a weighty expression of holy David's (in *1 Sam. xx. 3.*) and what we may all adopt in every circumstance of life. This is a thought not peculiar to young men, but particularly necessary to be inculcated upon them, because one of the great evils of youth, and that which prevents their being good betimes, is the expectation of a long life, depending confidently that they shall have time enough hereafter to be good; but *boast not yourselves of to-morrow, for you know not what a day may bring forth.* If you refuse these repeated invitations and admonitions, God may quickly require your souls; and we, your friends or ministers, may see you on a sick or dying bed, lifting up your pale and trembling hands, and crying out O for a little more time! And will God be unjust or unkind to deny you that favour, when he has called so often, and you have refused? If he call you hence, while your hearts are destitute of his fear, how will you appear before him? What will you do in that awful day, when an exact distinction and eternal separation shall be made between those that fear God and those that fear him not?

Let

Let these considerations be seriously laid to heart, and may they engage you to a serious, deliberate, firm resolution to take the Lord for your God, and employ your whole life in his service; then you may welcome death, how quickly soever it comes, and be calm and cheerful even in the approach of the final judgment. With this weighty thought Solomon concludes the book of Ecclesiastes; and in his expressive and striking words, I will address you, my young friends: *let us bear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole of man.* Amen.

## HYMN.

WHAT bright examples do I find

Writ in the word of truth,

Of many who began to mind

Religion in their youth..

Jesus, who reigns above the sky,

And keeps the world in awe,

Was once a child as young as I,

And kept his Father's law.

Samuel, the child, was wean'd and brought

To wait upon the Lord;

Young Timothy betimes was taught

To know his holy word.

Then why should I so long delay

What others learnt so soon?

I wou'd not pass another day,

Without this work begun.

## ADDRESS XXI.

YOUNG MEN EXHORTED TO REMEMBER  
THEIR CREATOR, BEFORE THE INFIR-  
MITIES OF AGE COME ON.

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ECCLESIASTES XII. 1.

*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy  
youth, while the evil days come not, nor the  
years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I  
have no pleasure in them.*

THESE, my young friends, are the words  
of Solomon, who was a great king and  
the wisest of men; who had known the com-  
forts of a life of religion and virtue, and who  
had also felt the sorrow and evils which at-  
tended youthful sins and follies. Behold him,  
therefore, as standing before you in his royal  
robes and in his hoary hairs, and from his  
own experience addressing you seriously from  
the words of our text, *Remember now thy  
Creator*

*Creator in the days of thy youth.* Remembering your Creator, implies, that you inquire after him, make yourselves acquainted with his perfections, and realize his presence with you, by habitually regarding him as having made you by the word of his power—as attending you at all times and in all places, so that you are constantly under his eye—as exercising his constant providence and goodness towards you—continually preserving you and doing you good—by considering him as your lawgiver and judge, and acting as those who are thus continually mindful of him. I might here with propriety point out to you how great and important a duty this is, and therefore ought to be attended to—how useful and necessary a duty it is for your security and happiness, as it will furnish the mind with the most excellent principles, to guide your conduct and support you under all events in life, and will be the solace and joy of your old age. But having often addressed you on these topics, I waive these particulars, and urge your attention to this great duty, from the consideration which Solomon suggests in the text and context;

you

you will remember they are arguments urged by the wisest of men, I hope therefore you will give them a serious attention, and may God cause them to reach your heart.

Solomon pleads, and I also would plead with you (first), THE RELATION OF GOD TO YOU AS YOUR CREATOR.—*Remember now thy Creator*; this speaks his greatness and goodness, and your entire dependence on him; this is urged as a great aggravation of the forgetfulness of God's own people—*Israel hath forgotten his Maker*. Consider I beseech you, my brethren, what great and noble effects of the divine power you yourselves are; what a wise and powerful Being he must be, who could produce the meanest creature, the least atom of insensible matter, and who could build up the least of the animal creation with so much workmanship; much more when you reflect on the rational soul, and the image of God in which you are formed; consider also his goodness that has communicated innumerable blessings to you, and to all the inferior creatures that are serviceable to you, and to ten thousand other more glorious beings

beings than yourselves in other worlds, at least in the court of heaven; he is *the father of spirits*, not only of those *who dwell here in houses of clay*, but of those shining spirits who surround his throne of glory: and where can be found so noble a subject for your inquiry, so worthy an object for your contemplation? And consider, further, your particular obligations and constant dependence on him; you reverence, I hope, your earthly parents, who brought you forth and educated you; and are you not under greater obligations to reverence the great Author and support of your being, *the God that daily loadeth you with his benefits?* The care of your parents over you was his care, their kindness was his kindness; can you ever be happy but in the favour of the God who made you? dare you forget him, by whom if you were forgotten, you are miserable for eternity? This is one argument to *remember your Creator in the days of your youth.*

Permit me to plead with Solomon (secondly)  
THE PLEASURES AND ADVANTAGES OF A  
RELIGIOUS LIFE; and this he emphatically  
represents

represents in the verse before the text: *therefore remove sorrow from thine heart, put away evil from thy flesh.*—Young people are ready to imagine that religion is a gloomy, uncomfortable thing; they think of it with horror, as if they were then going to take a final farewell of all the pleasures of life; they think a course of sinful indulgence the greatest delight, that to leave their merry companions, their houses of resort, their cups and their diversions, is such a loss as nothing in religion can make up; but, alas! you are entirely mistaken—they are your best friends who desire you to remember your Creator—this is the only way to remove sorrow from your heart. By an early remembrance of God you get rid of a vast load of guilt and sorrow, that will sooner or later press you down, *when God comes to reprove you, and set your sins in order before you.* You get rid also of that wretchedness that arises from the tyranny of unruly passions, that throws every thing into tumult and confusion. And it is added, *and put away evil from thy flesh;* probably here is a reference to those evils that are often brought upon

upon the body by a frequent indulgence of sensual appetites. If you indulge yourselves in riot and intemperance, the body will soon be worn out; and with regard to other sins, which at present may not have so bad a tendency, yet they may provoke God to visit you with smarting afflictions, and scourge you for your transgressions in such a manner, that one hour's sufferings shall be unspeakably dreadful; and *the fearful looking for of judgment* may imbitter every delight and increase every trouble. So that on the whole the best course to secure the peaceful possession of your mind and temporal blessings, as far as they are really valuable, is seriously to attend to the remembrance of your Creator; thus you will find wisdom's ways are *pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.*

I would further argue this duty (thirdly),  
FROM THE VANITY OF YOUTH. *Childhood and youth are vanity;* this expression is something ambiguous, and may signify that youth is an age of great temptation, and that it is an age of great uncertainty; and in both these senses it is a very important and natural

natural argument to engage you to the remembrance of God. **YOUTH IS AN AGE OF GREAT TEMPTATION.** Thus when Paul is writing to Timothy a young minister, who from a child had known the holy scriptures, he warns him thus (2 Tim. ii. 22.) *flee youthful lusts*: and he commands Titus to *exhort young men to be sober minded*; and persons of that age have a great deal of need of such a caution. Besides those temptations that are common to all ages and all circumstances, there is something peculiar in their constitution that inclines them to pride and vain confidence, sensuality and levity; they have a strong propensity to fancy themselves wise and prudent, and are naturally confident with regard to many months and years to come; they lay down many schemes for life while the body is healthful and vigorous, the spirits lively and easy; the morning is so clear and bright that they can scarce ever persuade themselves it will be evening; and they often act as if they thought every day a year; so profuse are they of their time, that they prosecute the pleasures and the entertainments

ments of life, and seldom think of *the one thing most needful*; the objects of sense then offer themselves to advantage; a spirit untaught, and undisciplined by instructions and afflictions, is light and airy, the sport of every wind, hurrying on in a circle of vanity, without any serious thought or grave and composed attention: this, alas! is the case with most; and I appeal to young persons themselves if they do not often find it so. There is indeed (blessed be God) some excepted cases; but all who are not careful of the government of themselves, soon become of this character: in this respect *childhood and youth are vanity*; and sometimes youth almost as vain as childhood; and the amusements that men follow, when they are grown up and come to years of discretion, are oftentimes as unworthy the regard of rational creatures, as the little toys with which infants are delighted.—I would further urge you to consider, that youth is an age of great uncertainty. Young persons are ready to think that their mountain stands strong, when, alas! there is not a year, and often not a month; nay,

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there is scarce a week in which a person, who has a pretty extensive acquaintance, does not see some taken away in the morning of their days. Man cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; our life is but of a short duration at the longest, like the growth of a flower, soon withered when in its best estate; and then it is liable by many little unthought-of accidents, to be cut off before it is arrived to its maturity; sometimes it dies all of a sudden, the springs of life stop at once, and death strikes without warning. Who does not see by so many instances how uncertain all dependencies on life are? how often our thoughts may perish, and our schemes for years to come vanish in a moment.

Solomon also pleads in the text, and I would also plead with you, my young friends, (fourthly) THE INFIRMITIES OF OLD AGE.— As an argument to *remember your Creator in the days of your youth*, suppose you should live to an old age, which none can promise themselves with any certainty or evidence— should the days of your lives be *three-score years and ten*; or, if by reason of strength  
you

you should attain to *four-score years*, yet they will be *evil days*, there will be no pleasure in them ; the eyes may grow so dim, that even the luminaries of heaven may scarce be discerned, the *clouds will return after the rain*, and one complaint of infirmity, weakness, and sorrow, come after another ; *the keepers of the house will tremble*, and the strong men *bow themselves* ; the legs and arms that are so necessary for motion and action, will grow feeble ; *the grinders will cease*, because they are few ; those that look out of the windows, that is, the eyes, will be darkened, there will be no pleasure in viewing agreeable objects ; persons in old age lose their appetite for the entertainments of life, that were once pleasant to them ; they *rise up at the sound of the bird*, lose their sleep, and rise in the morning as soon as the birds begin to sing, they cannot find rest and refreshment on their beds ; aged persons are often *afraid of that which is high*, a timorous spirit often takes hold of them, and breaks the natural fortitude of their minds ; *the almond-tree blossoms*, that is, the head grows grey, like the fruits of a ripe almond-tree ; *the grasshopper is a burden*, the

least thing in the world, that was before scarce observed, will grow a weight and burden; *and desire*, that is, the appetites and spirits shall fail, *because man goeth to his long home*, *and the mourners go about the streets*; the poor dying creature looks upon every funeral as a presage of his own, and all his comforts will be lost in the view of approaching death; *then shall the silver cords be loosened*, the nerves that convey sensation and motion to the whole body; *and the golden bowl be broken*, the brain itself shall lose its use, the memory and capacity of reason fail; *the pitcher also shall be broken at the cistern*; the heart, which by its fine motion caused the circulation of the blood in various parts of the body, shall cease to beat, and the consequence will be inevitable death; *then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it*: this is an elegant but mournful description which Solomon gives of old age; and many an aged person can witness it is true.—And now consider, my young friends, if God should spare you, will not these infirmities take hold of you; and are these pleasant and cheerful days? especially if to all the infirmities of a broken

and

and decayed constitution, the agonies of a *broken spirit* are added, with a sense of sin and fear of approaching wrath. My young friends, it is difficult work enough to die with all the strength of grace and approaching glory, to pass through these melancholy scenes, and preserve a calm and composed spirit; how much more difficult work will it be, if instead of the supports of early piety, you have the sorrowful reflections of youthful sins? And if you should not be given up of God, and sealed up under an impenitent heart, yet you will find great discouragement, and an uneasy conscience, when you are offering to God (who ought to have the best) the worst of your days, and the dregs of your time and strength.

Let me argue with Solomon (in the fifth and last place), THE SOLEMNITY OF APPROACHING JUDGMENT.—When Solomon in an ironical manner allows young persons to take their swing of worldly delights, to *walk in the ways of their hearts and the sight of their eyes*, he adds this as a thought that would be enough to damp their guilty joy and their vain presumptuous confidence, but

*know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.*—Oh thou vain, conceited sinner, think with thyself, and remember that thou must shortly appear before the judgment of God as an arraigned criminal at his tribunal; all thy roving and trifling vanities are remembered, all thy hours of mirth and scenes of gaiety are marked in his book, with a view to a future account another day: *know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment*, whether thou wilt or not; all resistance will be vain. My young friends, think I pray you, how will you stand before that tribunal; a thousand pleas that now serve as excuses to the admonitions given you by your wise and pious friends, will then signify nothing: how will you bear the terrors of that day when they will melt like snow before the sun? when a deluge of confusion and ruin will break in upon your minds with irresistible force.—I protest when I consider the uncertainty of human life, how frequent the instances of mortality are, and how frequently you are admonished of the judgment of God, I wonder how you do to get rid of the thought;

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I wonder it does not haunt you by day and night, wherever you go and whatever you do, that you are not a burden to yourselves, and terrified almost to distraction amidst your forgetfulness of God. If your hearts are so hard that you know nothing of this at present, you certainly will hereafter, when perhaps it will be too late:—but I forbear to enlarge on this head, as I intend it for the subject of my next address. In the mean time be exhorted to *remember your Creator in the days of your youth*, before all these evil and terrible days come upon you. Amen.

*H Y M N.*

**N**OW in the heat of youthful blood,  
Remember your Creator, God ;  
Behold the months come haft'ning on  
When you shall say, My joys are gone.

Behold, the aged finner goes,  
Laden with guilt and heavy woes,  
Down to the region of the dead,  
With endless curses on his head.

The dust returns to dust again ;  
The soul, in agonies of pain,  
Ascends to God—not there to dwell ;  
But hears her doom, and sinks to hell.

Eternal King ! I fear thy name—  
Teach me to know how frail I am ;  
And when my soul must hence remove,  
Give me a mansion in thy love.

*ADDRESS*

## ADDRESS XXII.

### YOUTH REMINDED OF A FUTURE JUDGMENT

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ECCLESIASTES xi. 9.

*Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*

MY young friends, I can truly say, there is no part of my work on which I enter with more concern, or in which I am more solicitous about success, than in my addresses to you. I am glad to avail myself of every circumstance that may engage your attention; and shall think myself much more honoured and happy in bringing any one of your souls to Christ and heaven, than if crowns and kingdoms were bestowed upon me:

me: could you see my heart, you would find there such a tender concern for your eternal welfare, as no words can express; and which I am sure you can no otherwise repay, than by becoming wise and good, and giving diligent heed to the things that are spoken to you.

The words of the text are generally (and I think very justly) considered as an irony, that is, a form of expression which in the strongest manner forbids what it seems to allow; just as if I should say in common language, do such and such a thing if you dare: this form of expression is often used on the most serious occasions, both in the Old and New Testament: thus Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, *cry aloud, for he is a God; either he is talking, or pursuing, or on a journey, or peradventure he must be awaked*:—thus Christ said to his disciples, when he came to them a third time and found them sleeping; *you may sleep on now and take your rest*:—and thus Solomon, in the text, *rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the*

*sight*

*sight of thine eyes ; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.*

These words evidently describe A GIDDY PURSUIT OF PLEASURE AND A LICENTIOUS CONDUCT.—*To walk in the ways of their heart and the sight of their eyes, cannot be understood in any other light ; the heart is described by him who best knew it, as deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.* Thus the corrupt Israelites are described as saying, *we shall have peace though we walk in the imagination of our hearts, and add drunkenness to thirst.*—*Out of the heart* (our Lord tells us) *proceed evil thoughts, murders, adultery, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemy ; therefore nothing can be worse than to follow the devices and desires of our corrupt hearts ; and to walk in the sight of thine eyes is equally bad and dangerous, for what is it but to look at those things that are seen and temporal, and be blind to those things that are unseen and eternal.* What is in the world but *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life ?* these things are daily presented to the sight of your eyes ; to walk in them is going  
the.

*the broad way that leads to death, and is as directly opposite as light is to darkness, to that divine precept, walk by faith, and not by sight.*

The words further intimate, that YOUNG PERSONS ARE NATURALLY TOO MUCH INCLINED TO SUCH A COURSE, to *walk in the way of their hearts and in the sight of their eyes.* Thus (in Gen. vi. 5.) it is said, that *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;—foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;—he is born like a wild ass's colt* (Job xi. 12.) a giddy, thoughtless creature, impatient of restraint, and ready to spurn at those who would feed, tame, and serve him. These scripture expressions are sufficient to shew the aptitude there is in young minds to go astray, and walk in the way of their corrupt hearts and wandering eyes: and a further and striking proof of this arises from common observation. Look around you on the vast number of young people growing up for eternity; but, alas! *where are the wise, where are the prudent.* Do they not almost universally go astray like lost sheep? alas! what unc hasty

unchastity and impurity is to be found with some—what pride and self-conceit is there in others—what disobedience to parents—what excessive mirth and undue gaiety of temper—what folly, trifling, and vanity, is observable in others—and what sad forgetfulness of God, and the great concerns of their souls and another world, is to be found almost in all. I hope some of you are better disposed than this, and are exceptions to this painful account; but how small is the number! and how few can you prevail upon to join with you in this noble pursuit, and *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness!* Alas! the generality are not walking in those paths, but in *the way of their hearts and the sight of their eyes.* Was a further proof of this point wanting, I might appeal to your own feelings; has not every one of you found a backwardness to seek and serve God? a disrelish at times for the holy business of a sabbath, for sermons, prayers, praises, and other important duties? have you not found, and do you not even now often feel a proneness to forget God? to trifle in his work? to comply with the customs of

of the world, the vanities of the times, and follow a multitude to do evil? do you not find a sad propensity to break through the bounds of religion, and sin against God and your own souls, in instances that would probably end in certain and everlasting ruin? All this shews that young persons are too much inclined to such a course as the text describes.

The wise man further intimates, that THERE IS SOMETHING IN THE ARTICLE OF YOUTH ITSELF THAT HAS A PARTICULAR TENDENCY TO LEAD TO THIS COURSE—this is strongly implied in the first clause of the text, *rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth;* and certain it is that youth is a time of great danger in this view: this danger arises (as I have often told you) from a certain volubility of spirits in youth, that will seldom fix steadily on one thing, and yet will always be doing something; there is also then a strength of passions that overcomes the first weak efforts of reason, and hurries on to actions, without considering their nature or consequences. Youth is likewise very impatient

of restraint—liberty, unbounded liberty, is an object they are universally seeking after; and every restraint of conscience, of parents, nay of God himself, is at first a heavy burden, and it requires great grace to bow their necks to the yoke.—There is likewise at this period, a sad want of experience; youth is generally open and honest, and think all things and all men are according to their outward appearance; this deceives their undesigning minds, and leads their uncautious feet into a thousand snares:—besides, youth have many bad examples; young people seldom think much for themselves, the most they do is from imitation; and since they see bad examples so much more numerous than good ones, their danger is very great of following *the multitude to do evil*.—But perhaps the thought that Solomon had principally in view here, was, that their youth is a snare, as it leads them to hope for some future period when they may amend. Alas! they are too ready to think and say, they are young, it is time enough for them to be serious when they are grown up men and come to

to old age ; that now is the time for pleasure and indulgence, at least a little longer ; this is the most fatal snare of youth—it has deceived, it has destroyed thousands and thousands.

Now to guard youth against all these dangers and snares, and preserve them from walking *in the ways of their heart and the sight of their eyes*, the wise man expressly WARNS THEM OF A FUTURE JUDGMENT : *know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment* ; these are awful words, and coming immediately after the former, in which there is a seeming licence given to young people to follow their inclinations, they appear doubly striking. There is a sense in which GOD MAY BRING YOUNG PEOPLE TO JUDGMENT IN THE PRESENT LIFE : if they continue to sin against him he may bring temporal judgments upon them ; he may take away their health and vigour, and leave them to pine under sickness and disease all their life ; he may take away their substance and their friends, and leave them at once fatherless and penniless in the world, and make their substance, and their friends,

and every earthly object, a curse instead of a blessing: according to those very awful words (in *Deut. xxviii. 15*, and following verses), *but it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and statutes which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee; cursed shalt thou be in the city and in the field, in thy basket and in thy store, in the fruit of thy body and in the fruit of thy land, in thy kine, and flocks, and sheep; cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in and when thou goest out; the Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand for to do, until thou be destroyed and until thou perish quickly*: or God may do worse than this, he may send his judgment into their souls, he may *make them possess the iniquities of their youth*, and turn their own conscience into an accuser, a judge, and a tormentor. All wicked youths have reason to fear these things; but particularly the wicked children of pious parents, their guilt is so great and their crimes so aggravated, that they may

justly

justly expect God will make their plagues wonderful. There have been many instances in which God has brought young persons to such judgments as these in the present life; but THE TEXT SPEAKS OF A STILL MORE DREADFUL JUDGMENT IN ANOTHER WORLD; and of this judgment he solemnly warns the young sinner in the text, as a most powerful preservative against walking *in the way of his heart and the sight of his eyes*, as a thought that might fix his roving eye, and engage his fickle mind to the concerns of his soul and a future state: *know thou that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment*; every word is important—it intimates, that JUDGMENT WILL CERTAINLY COME. *It is appointed to all men once to die, and after that the judgment*; in that day he will judge the world by Jesus Christ, whom he hath ordained the judge of the quick, or living, and the dead.—The text not only intimates the certainty, but THE UNIVERSALITY OF THIS JUDGMENT: according to other declarations of scripture, that every one must give account of himself to God. These words are addressed to every young person in

the world, to every young man and young woman: Solomon says, *know thou that God will bring thee into judgment*; whoever thou art, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, however proud, or vain, or thoughtless, or dissolute, or profane; whatever thy character, or age, or circumstances, *know thou that God will bring thee into judgment*.

The words intimate that **THIS JUDGMENT WILL BE VERY STRICT**: for all these things thou shalt be brought *into judgment*; for all the *evil ways of thy beart*, for all thy proud looks and profane speeches, for all the follies of youth, for all thy mispent time, undue levity of conduct, neglect of God, of prayer, of ordinances, yea, *for every idle word thou shalt give account unto God*; he will set all thy sins in order before thee, and proclaim them before the whole world; then thou shalt stand at his bar, and see if thou canst answer for *one sin of a thousand*; he will not forget this serious admonition, he will bring thee to account for this address, for every instruction of parents, and friends, and ministers, which you have enjoyed—for all these things thou shalt be brought *into judgment*.

The

The words intimate further, that THIS JUDGMENT WILL BE VERY AWFUL—it will be the judgment of God; *God will bring thee into judgment*, the last trumpet shall awake thee and all that sleep in their graves, and they shall come forth; but thou, O vain young person, thou wilt be averse to come forth, thou wilt *call to the rocks and hills to fall on thee, and bide thee from the face of him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb*; but all in vain—he will bring thee, God's almighty arm shall seize thee; a weak, trembling fugitive; he will bring thee into his presence, and there thou shalt meet with judgment, the judgment of an almighty, just, and holy God. And THIS JUDGMENT WILL BE FINAL—there can be no appeal to any other tribunal—the charge against thee is walking *in the ways of thine heart and the sight of thine eyes*, contrary to all the commandments of thy God, in opposition to all the warnings of ministers, the advice of parents, the strivings of God's spirit, and every method of recovering grace; if it then appears that thou art guilty, without repentance and renovation.

novation of heart, thy doom is fixed, thy sentence is recorded—read it, hear it, these are the tremendous words, *depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* This is the certain and universal, the strict, awful, and final judgment and condemnation of a young man that *walks in the ways of his heart and the sight of his eyes;* it is terrible to hear it—only just to hear the words—oh! what then will it be to meet it? to feel it executed, to lie down under it in despair, with your wicked companions, in blackness of darkness for ever?

And now let me entreat you to consider WHAT REASON YOUNG PERSONS HAVE TO BE ALARMED AT THEIR DANGER.—Have you not seen what an evil and dreadful thing it is to *walk in the ways of your hearts and the sight of your eyes?* have not your knees almost trembled and your heart sunk within you, while you heard the strict, the awful, the terrible judgment and condemnation to which it will expose you? have you not been convinced of the propensity of your hearts, to walk in a way that is not good, and to follow a multitude

a multitude to do evil? nay, have you not in many sad instances followed its corrupt inclinations, and sinned against God? do you not see dangers standing thick on every side? your volubility of spirits, your strength of passions, your impatience of restraint, your want of experience, the bad examples that surround you, the cunning enemies that tempt you, the delusive world in which you live, and the vain presumptuous hope that rises in your breast, of more time and inclination hereafter?—all these are powerful enemies around you and within you—God knows you stand in jeopardy every hour. What need is there for every one of you to *watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation?* how careful should you be what thoughts you indulge, what words you speak, what actions you perform, what company you keep, what books you read, what sermons you hear, what time you lose, what pleasures you pursue, what mirth you indulge—since in all these things you are surrounded with so many snares, and for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Oh! that you would consider your ways, that you were sensible of

your

your danger, and concerned to *flee from the wrath to come*—then there would be hope.— Alas ! it is your thoughtlessness and security that damp our rising hopes, and fill our breasts with painful apprehensions. Could we once see you fearful of sin, watching against temptations, praying for divine grace to help and preserve you, then our fears would much subside, and our souls overflow with joy; then would we turn your eyes and your thoughts from THESE TERRIBLE SCENES TO JESUS CHRIST, through whom the evil ways of your hearts may be forgiven; he died for your sins, he rose again for your justification; he lives now to plead your cause in heaven— and whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. Yes I can assure you, and it is the joy of our hearts to tell you, that Jesus can deliver you from the wrath to come; that through him God waits to be gracious, and extends the sceptre of his mercy to every penitent sinner, saying, *thy sins and iniquities I will remember no more.* Jesus, who presides over the day of wrath, and is the final judge of all, now opens his arms to embrace you as his friends, and entreats.

entreats you to come to him that you may have life, and have it abundantly. If you ask him, he can give you a new heart and a right spirit, and put his spirit within you, and cause you to walk in his statutes and judgments to do them. All I have said of the evil of your hearts and your ways, of the snares that surround you, and of judgment to come, all was intended to lead you to this Saviour, who is able to save to the utmost all that come unto God by him: young as you are, he will gather you in his arms, and carry you in his bosom; and the day is coming when God himself will rejoice over you with joy, will rest in his love, and joy over you with singing. Whatever visionary delights you give up, whatever wholesome restraints you are laid under, by choosing the Lord to serve him, you will have repaid a thousand fold by his favour, which is life, and his loving kindness, which is better than life. And in that day, that judgment day, which shall strike unutterable terror into the hearts of millions, ye shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day; ye shall be unto me as a crown of glory, and as a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

I conclude

I conclude all, with exhorting you to **KEEP THIS AWFUL JUDGMENT DAY CONTINUALLY UPON YOUR MINDS**; begin and close every day with the thought of that day; enter your closets, enter the house of God, hear every sermon, attend to every duty with this thought, *know thou, O my soul, that for all these things God will bring me into judgment*; carry it with you into every scene of diversion and temptation; it will be a constant preservative of your virtue; it will blunt every arrow of those who aim to wound your peace; it will be a continual motive to watchfulness and prayer; and, through divine grace, will render you wise, pious, holy and happy for ever.

After all these serious addresses, I fear some of you will go away unaffected; or if you are now impressed a little, you will lose the impression before this week or this night is ended. It is a painful thought; but we will call upon God, that what has been said may take hold on your hearts, and *make you wise unto salvation*. But if after all we see you returning to folly, and walking *in the dreadful ways*

*ways of your own heart and the sight of your eyes, we will go mourning to our closets and mourning to our graves—that, with respect to you, we have laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought.*

*H Y M N.*

YE sons of Adam, vain and young,  
Indulge your eyes, indulge your tongue;  
Taste the delights your souls desire,  
And give a loose to all your fire:

Pursue the pleasures you design,  
And cheer your hearts with songs and wine;  
Enjoy the day of mirth; but know,  
There is a day of judgment too.

God from on high beholds your thoughts,  
His book records your secret faults;  
The works of darkness you have done,  
Must all appear before the sun.

The vengeance, to your follies due,  
Should strike your hearts with terror thro':—  
How will you stand before his face,  
Or answer for his injur'd grace?

Almighty God, turn off their eyes  
From these alluring vanities;  
And let the thunder of thy word  
Awake their souls to fear the Lord.

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*FINIS.*

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